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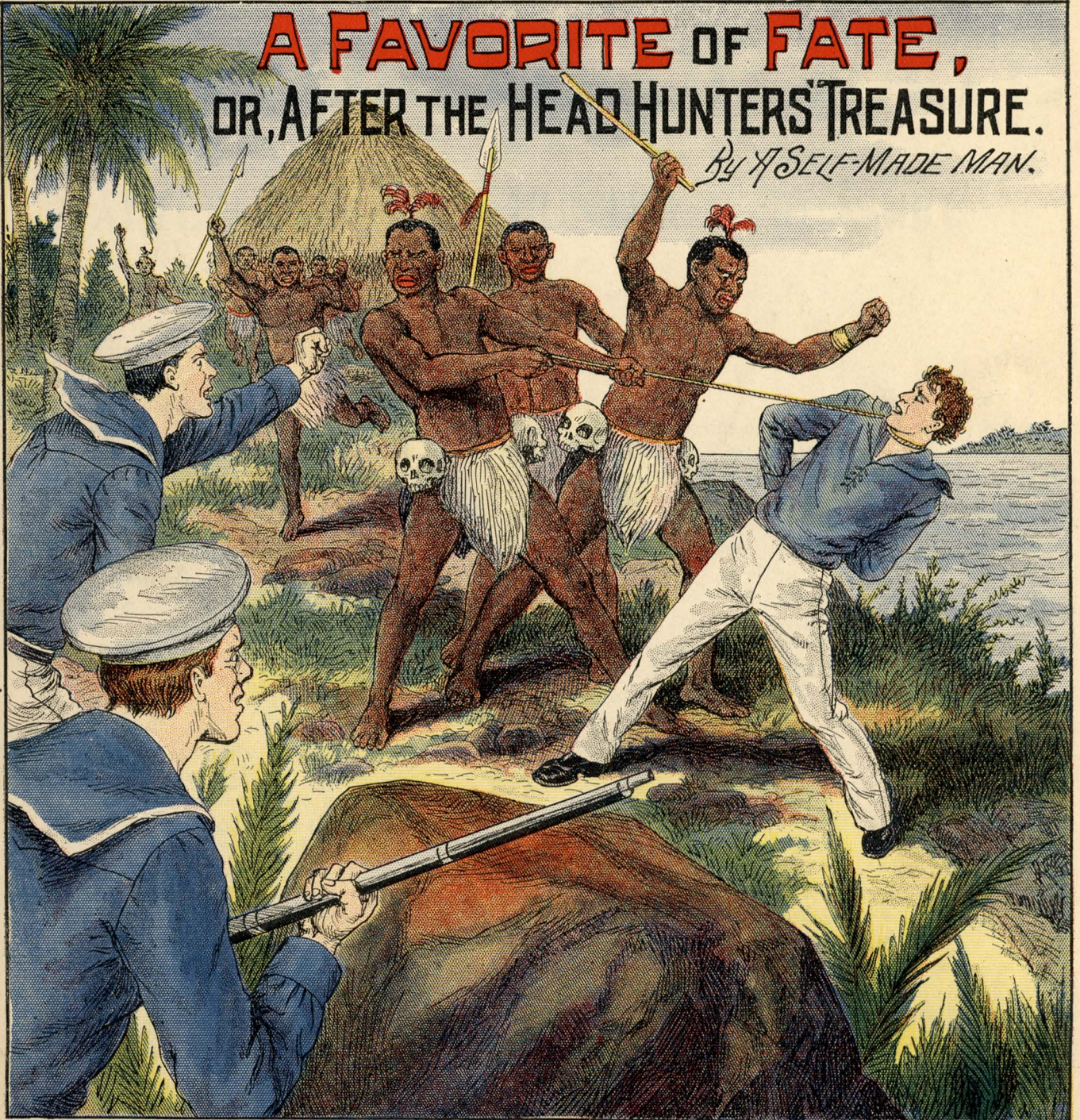
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FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

A FAVORITE OF FATE,
OR, AFTER THE HEAD HUNTERS' TREASURE.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.



Jack, bound and helpless, was pulled by the brawny native to the edge of the bluff. As another savage menaced him with a stick, Sam and Mike rose from their place of concealment. "Stop, ye villains!" shouted Mike, aggressively.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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A FAVORITE OF FATE

OR,

AFTER THE HEAD HUNTERS' TREASURE

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.

IN AN AFRICAN JUNGLE.

"Where are we at all at all?" exclaimed Mike Murphy, lugubriously, as he and his two companions, Jack Jordan and Sam Singer, both Americans by birth, came to a stop in the midst of an African jungle that was a perfect maze of trees, with interlaced creepers, rank vegetation, and brilliantly-colored tropical flowers.

"Where are we?" echoed Jack. "I wish I knew."

"Then it's lost we are," replied Mike, looking helplessly around.

"I'm afraid we are, Mike."

"Oh, wurra, wurra; we'll never see Ameriky any more. Bad luck to the storm that drove us ashore on this haythenish coast! We ought to have stuck to the shore, where we could see the say at any rate, instead of comin' into this wild region where there's niver a road or even a path to shape our course by."

The three boys were dressed in natty sailor rigs, for they had belonged to an American gentleman's yacht that was sailing down the African coast when a sudden storm drove her ashore, a complete wreck, on a desolate and uninhabited stretch of beach, bristling with rocks.

That event happened several days before, and the three boys were the only survivors of the catastrophe.

Fortunately the cabin portion of the yacht lodged between two big rocks, and did not immediately go to pieces.

When the storm had somewhat abated, a few hours after the disaster, and the sun had warmed the half dead lads back to life and a realization of their helplessness, they

examined the remains of the wreck, and found in the demoralized pantry a small breaker of fresh water and a limited quantity of provisions—enough to last them on half rations several days.

This was extremely fortunate, else they must have perished of hunger and thirst, since there was nothing in the shape of food in sight.

The boys also secured three rifles and three belts full of ball cartridges from the wreck of the captain's stateroom.

Each was also provided with a sailor's sheath-knife fastened to a belt around their waist.

Jack also found the captain's revolver, fully loaded, and a small box of cartridges.

The weapon was not a large one, and easily went into his hip pocket.

Jack, by virtue of his seniority of a few months, assumed the leadership, and his two companions, who felt all at sea on the strange shore upon which they had been cast, offered no objection to his suggestion that they strike into the interior and try to find their way to some native village where they might find a missionary who would be able to advise them how to reach civilization.

After cutting across a bare country for many miles they struck a tropical wood, the grateful shade of which they duly appreciated, and pushed forward with fresh hope and animation.

At first they followed what seemed to be a beaten track, but after awhile they lost this and went ahead at random.

As a result, after pursuing their way through it for the best part of the day they woke up to the fact that the wood was an endless stretch of trees and thick vegetation, and they had completely lost all track of the direction they had

come, and they knew no more what was before them than if they had dropped out of the moon.

"I'm afraid we're in a rather serious predicament," said Sam Singer. "Our provisions won't last long even if we eat as little as possible; while, as for water there is hardly any left—not much more than a decent drink all around. The question is what are we going to do when our supplies give out?"

"I couldn't tell you, Sam. I haven't the faculty of looking into the future," replied Jack, in as cheerful a tone as he could command, for as the admitted leader of the little party he felt that the responsibility of keeping up the courage of all hands rested on him.

"Don't talk about atin' and drinkin' or ye'll give me a fit. Faith, I'm that hungry I could ate a——what's that? Begorry, it's alive. Or, Lord, it's one of thim native nagurs lookin' at us out of the bushes."

Jack looked and then burst into a laugh.

"Why, it's only a monkey," he said.

"A monkey, is it? Look at the size of him. He must be the father of all the monkeys in the country," said Mike. "Sure I've seen monkeys in the cage at Central Park, so I have, but niver one of thim was near the size of him."

The animal in question was standing upright on the ground with one long hairy arm extended toward a tree, upon which his hand rested.

He was not really a monkey, though he belonged to the monkey tribe, but a young gorilla—the most ferocious and dangerous of all the species.

His attitude was very human as he stood and blinked at the three invaders of the primitive wood.

Doubtless he had never seen three white boys rigged out in white sailor attire before, and to his unsophisticated vision they looked decidedly out of place.

He made an odd figure in the cool, green light of the arching trees and festooned vines.

Had he been of full size, Mike would certainly have regarded him as the great-grandfather of all the monkeys in creation.

Jack made a demonstration at the gorilla with his rifle, but the animal never made a move.

He favored the boys with a succession of grimaces, which meant something, no doubt, but which they couldn't understand.

"I suppose you don't know that monkey meat is considered a great delicacy in this country," said Jack.

"Monkey mate, is it!" ejaculated Mike, with a look of disgust. "The saints presarve me from bein' reduced to the necessity of atin' it. Sure I'd feel like a cannibal, so I would."

"Say, what's that yonder?" asked Sam. "Looks like some kind of fruit."

They walked toward it and found that it was a kind of wild pineapple.

"I wonder if it would be safe to tackle it?" said Sam, looking at the fruit with a longing eye.

"We'll cut one down and taste it," said Jack. "A fellow might as well take some risk when grub is as scarce as it is with us."

So the pineapple was sampled and found to be quite palatable.

The boys were so hungry that they chanced the conse-

quences and each helped himself to one, cut it open with their knives and began eating it.

The young gorilla watched them with a fresh interest, and moved his jaws in sympathy with theirs.

"Will ye'z watch that monkey," said Mike. "I belave he would like a pineapple himself."

"Then he shall have one," replied Jack, who cut down another, sliced it open and then tossed it to the animal.

The gorilla picked it up and was soon chewing on it with great relish.

"If the monkey will ate it I guess it's all right," said Mike.

"I thought you said it was a monkey. Sure what else is it?"

"It's a young gorilla. I recognize the species by the long arms and its size. I hope we don't meet a full grown one or there's likely to be trouble."

"What, are there bigger one's than that?"

"Are they? I should say so. That's only a baby one."

"For Hivin's sake! And what is the size of a full-grown one?" asked the astonished Mike.

"Over six feet," replied Jack, who had an idea they grew as tall as eight feet, but this was not a fact, as a full-developed gorilla is not, as a rule, over five feet and a half high.

It inhabits exclusively the densest tropical forests, and is only found in regions where fresh water is abundant, so that the boys had a good chance of running across a stream at which to slake their thirst and lay in a new supply of that necessary liquid.

The pineapples, however, temporarily relieved their thirst, and now that there appeared to be a chance of finding food on their route, they started on with a fresh heart; but they took the precaution to add a few of the pineapples to the bag in which they carried their food supply for fear they might not find the fruit when they wanted it.

The young gorilla folowed them at a short distance.

"Why is that monkey followin' us?" asked Mike.

"Because he's taken a fancy to you," chuckled Jack.

"To me? Maybe it's yourself, begorry. You gave him the pineapple."

"That doesn't make any difference. He seems to look at you more than at either Sam or me. Maybe he thinks you're a relative of his in disguise."

"I suppose you think that's witty?" said Mike, with a growl.

At that moment they plunged in among a lot of gigantic ferns and lost sight of the gorilla.

The rainbow-tinted birds grew more numerous as they advanced, and they soon came upon a small army of monkeys that leaped chattering on their march from bough to bough.

Mike recognized these familiar animals at once, but they acted a whole lot different from those he had seen in a circus, or caged at Central Park in New York.

The Irish lad was carrying the bag with the provisions, while Sam carried his rifle with his own.

Suddenly one of the monkeys leaped on the bag and began digging at it.

In a moment several others followed suit and down went Mike on the ground with a howl of consternation.

For a moment it looked as if all the monkeys in the immediate vicinity contemplated piling on top of the boy.

Jack interfered in time to save him.

He attacked the bunch with the butt of his rifle and they drew off, some of them with sore limbs.

"May the saints defend me; sure it's kilt I am," groaned Mike dismally.

"Get up, they're gone now," said Sam.

The Irish lad got on his knees and looked fearfully around.

"Gone, is it? There's the whole caboodle of 'em grinnin' at me from the trees. They're only waitin' for me to get up. Bad luck to ye all," he cried, shaking his fist at the nearest lot. "Why don't ye shute some of thim and tache them manners?"

"Come on, we can't stay here all day," said Jack. "You go ahead and I'll see that they don't monkey with you any more."

Mike got up, yanked the bag on his back again, and proceeded, but it was clear that he was ill at ease after his experience.

The monkeys followed them up close, apparently meditating another attack on Mike, for the contents of the bag appeared to interest them.

Things got so strenuous that Jack finally fired into a thick bunch of them, killing one and wounding another.

The crowd set up a tremendous chattering and then disappeared like magic.

"Faith, ye ought to have done that before," said Mike. "What a blessed relief to get rid of thim divils."

In the course of twenty minutes, during which they encountered another troupe of monkeys, who, however, did not offer to molest them, they reached the bank of a stream of fresh water.

The three boys drank heartily, and then Jack filled the small breaker he had slung to his back.

The bushes were loaded with a kind of luscious berry which they ate greedily without considering whether they were poisonous or not.

They were tired out and hot, even under the shelter of the green canopy above them, and, stretching out at the foot of a big tree, they closed their eyes and very soon were sound asleep.

CHAPTER II.

DANGER.

Jack was the first to awake.

It was close on to sundown, and as it was a tropical region, darkness would fall without intervention of twilight as soon as the sun disappeared.

The young leader determined to take advantage of the brief interval of daylight to reconnoiter the stream for a short distance to see whether, in his judgment, he and his companions had better follow it.

He did not intend to go far, and did not fear that as long as he kept beside the stream he would miss the spot where his friends lay asleep.

Accordingly, without burdening himself with his rifle, he started ahead.

He had been gone perhaps a quarter of an hour when Mike awakened.

He sat up and rubbed his eyes.

"Where am I, I dunno," he exclaimed, in some bewilderment, looking around. "Oh, I remimber now. In this blessed African jungle, may Ould Nick shute it for a monkey's paradise. When will we be after gettin' out of it, I'd like to know? It's enough I've had of Afriky to last me for the rist of me days. Hullo, where's Jack? It's gone he is. Faith, he can't have gone far, for there's his rifle and the breaker of water. Maybe he's takin' a bath. Sure that's just what I'd like to take mesilf. The water looks fine, so it does. That's an invitation for me to go in. Begorry, it won't have to ask me twice. I suppose Jack has gone behind thim bushes. Thin I'll folly him and take a swim."

Mike went to the water's edge, looked up and down the stream, but saw nothing of Jack.

"Where the dickens has he gone to?" he said. "The stream isn't swift enough to carry him off. Oh, well, he's somewhere around, I suppose. I'll take me bath without botherin' mesilf about him."

He removed his clothes under the shelter of a bush and waded into the water.

"Faith this is fine, so it is. Sam doesn't know what he's missin'. Sure it would be a charitable act on me part to call his attintion to a luxury we haven't enj'ed since we left the sayshore. Well, I'll do it in a minute. I hate to lave a good thing whin I'm over head and ears in it."

So Mike continued in the water, loath to leave it even to call Sam.

In the meantime Sam slept on serenely.

And while he slept there came a rustle in the bushes, and presently a black head, and then a nearly naked body, pushed through the vegetation and came out into the little clearing.

The intruder was a native African of sinewy build and rather repellant face.

His entire raiment consisted of only a breech-cloth, at the side of which was slung a knife of European manufacture.

His sharp, glittering black eyes rested on the sleeper, and he stopped in surprise, though his face betrayed no emotion of any kind.

Gliding up to the boy he looked down at him, then he saw the three rifles standing against the tree, and he counted them with his finger.

That impressed him with the fact that the lad was not alone, and he looked around with crafty caution.

Slipping to the ground he examined the contents of the bag.

He uttered a grunt of satisfaction.

Then he turned his attention to the breaker, removing the cork and smelling of what was in it.

With a grunt of disapproval he laid it down without taking the trouble to replace the cork.

He reached for the bag again, and in doing so dislodged one of the guns which fell across Sam's chest and awoke him.

He started up and found himself looking into the negro's ugly countenance.

"Hello, who are you?" ejaculated the boy.

The native uttered a guttural exclamation and whisked out his knife, which he brandished before Sam's face.

Sam was a bit frightened, for he saw that his companions were not in sight.

"What do you want?" he asked the black.

The native did not understand him, but he knew what he wanted.

That was the bag with the provisions, and he intended to take it.

He flourished his knife again so close to Sam's nose that the lad drew back in dismay.

At that juncture the crack of a revolver sounded close at hand.

The native uttered a screech, dropped his knife and fled through the bushes in a panic, the blood running down his glossy black skin from a bullet wound in the shoulder.

Sam sprang on his feet and saw Jack advancing toward him.

Mike's scared face also appeared in the bushes near the stream.

"Where did that rascal come from?" asked Jack.

"Blessed if I know," replied Sam. "I was asleep. Something awoke me and I found the fellow almost on top of me. He yanked out his knife and threatened me with it. I thought he was going to stick me."

"I guess I didn't get here any too quick to save you," replied Jack. "We'll have to look out, for where there's one there are likely to be more."

"Then you think we'd better not camp here as we intended?"

"I've found a better place up the stream. We'll go there. Where's Mike?"

"Here I am," cried the Irish lad, showing himself in undress attire. "It's a swim I've been takin'. When I heard the shot I thought some baste was attackin' yez, and as I had nothin' to defend meself with, I got into the bushes."

"Get into your clothes. We're going to move up the stream."

"What for? What did yez shute at?"

"One of the inhabitants of the country," replied Jack.

"Do yez mane a lion, or a tiger, or one of thim full-grown gorillas?"

"No, I mean a man—a native—who was going to carve Sam up."

"Carve him up—what do yez mane?"

Sam explained his brief experience with the black.

"The saints protect us! Let's get away from here."

Mike hurried his clothes on, and the party started for the place Jack had selected for their night encampment.

It proved to be a small cave in a rocky mound.

It offered protection on all sides except the front from wild beasts.

A fire outside would do the rest, but the boys debated whether to light one or not lest it attract the attention of any hostile natives who might be in the vicinity.

They gathered the material for it, and by the time it was ready for a match night was upon them.

They ate their supper and then sat down inside the entrance to talk and watch.

Strange, wierd noises now filled the air, and beasts of

prey came forth from their lairs to prowl about in search of food.

They saw glowing eyes staring in their direction from the other side of the stream.

Howls and blood-curdling yelps resounded all around.

"Begorry, this is pleasant, I don't think," said Mike. "We'd better light the fire or thim wild bastes may spring in at us before we could shute one of thim."

So the fire was lighted, and its blaze made things more cheerful.

"We'll have to take turns standing watch—about three hours apiece. We'll toss up to see who takes the first spell, and who relieves him."

"Sure I'll never be able to tell whin three hours have gone by," said Mike.

"You'll have to guess at it if you get the first or second watch," said Jack, picking up three small twigs of unequal lengths. "I'll drop these in my cap. Whoever gets the shortest twig stands first watch. The next shortest marks the second watcher. That leaves the last watch to the remaining member of our party."

The lots were drawn, and Jack found he was to watch first, Sam to follow.

"You won't have any guessing to do, Mike. You'll remain on duty till sunrise, and then you'll wake up," said Jack.

The boys did not feel particularly sleepy, as they had enjoyed a good afternoon nap, but for all that Jack told his friends to turn in, and they did.

Soon silence reigned in the little encampment, but the noises of the night seemed to grow louder every moment.

"I never thought when I shipped aboard that yacht at New York that I'd run up against such experience as this," thought Jack, when his companions had fallen asleep. "I looked for nothing but a pleasant cruise in foreign waters with good pay and first-class grub. Well, things turned out all right until that storm came up and dumped Sam, Mike and myself on this beastly coast. An old fortune-teller told me once, after looking at my hand, that I was a favorite of fate. She said I'd travel to a foreign land and get rich there. Well, I've got to the foreign land, all right, but there's precious little chance of me getting rich there. I shall be perfectly satisfied if I reach some port where I can ship for home. The prospect of doing that is not over bright at present."

An hour passed away and the solitude and lonesomeness of his surroundings began to have a lulling effect on the watcher, and he caught himself dozing.

"This won't do. I mustn't go to sleep. I must brace up. Time enough to think of sleeping when Sam comes on duty," he said.

Suddenly Jack thought he saw a succession of shadows come out of the bushes on the opposite side of the stream and line up there.

Not a sound came from that direction, and the boy was almost persuaded his eyes had deceived him.

He watched intently, however, for he was taking no chances with any prowlers of the night, whether they walked on four legs or on two.

The fact that they had encountered one native he took as a sign that there were others in the neighborhood.

As that black's actions had been far from friendly, it was

necessary to guard against surprise on the part of his friends.

The glare of the fire lying between him and the stream made it difficult for him to see the shadowy forms that seemed to be standing motionless on the opposite side of the water.

The quantity of reserve fuel piled around the entrance to the little cave prevented the fire light from exposing the interior of the boys' refuge, and a projecting stone partially screened Jack's reclining body also.

His rifle lay across his legs in such a way that he could easily bring it to bear on an intruder by merely lifting it.

The main piece of fuel on the fire was a short, dry log, the remains of the trunk of a tree which had fallen months since.

While Jack was peering into the gloom the log shifted its position, falling over on the bed of live embers.

A momentary blaze shot up, illuminating the vicinity, and then Jack distinctly saw four natives standing like black statues on the opposite bank.

As the fire died down again the natives, with one accord, started to wade across the shallow stream.

They reached the bank near the cave, divided in twos, and circled around the fire in both directions.

Each native carried a glittering knife in his hand, similar to the one the chap had menaced Sam with.

Jack took that as an indication of an unfriendly purpose, and as he didn't propose to be set upon and overpowered if he could help it, he raised his magazine rifle and fired at the nearest native.

CHAPTER III.

MIKE'S TWO LUCKY SHOTS.

The report of the weapon aroused Sam and Mike at once.

The natives were taken by surprise, for they had counted on completely surprising the boys, when they heard no sound coming from the cave.

Before Jack could bring his gun to bear on the other brave they disappeared into the bushes near the cave.

"What's the matter?" asked Sam. "Been shooting at some animal?"

"No. Four natives with drawn knives tried to surprise us, and I've shot one of them. Come outside and let's take a look at him," replied Jack.

They found the fellow quite dead.

"You must have hit another, too," said Sam. "There's blood along the ground where he crawled away into the shrubbery."

Two knives lay near the body of the dead man.

Mike picked them up.

"Begorry, I wouldn't like to have one of thim stuck into me," he said.

They tossed the body into the stream and the water carried it away.

Then after replenishing the fire they re-entered the cave.

"Turn in, you chaps, my watch isn't out yet," said Jack.

"I don't want any more sleep," said Sam. "Turn in yourself, and I'll watch."

"All right; but you want to keep your weather eye lifting. Those fellows may come back with reinforcement to avenge the death of their comrade," said Jack.

"I'll keep my eye out for them," replied Sam.

Accordingly, Jack and Mike lay down and were soon asleep.

Sam found that a lone watch was not the pleasantest thing in the world.

There was no danger of him going to sleep with the noises of the night all around him, but it was a tiresome job to sit there and just look out into the darkness.

Half an hour elapsed and then he heard a splash in the stream, and presently a ghastly-looking jackal came close to the outer fringe of the fire light.

He was hungry and savage, and displayed two horrible rows of teeth.

He started to follow the trail of blood that led into the bushes.

He had gone maybe five minutes when a shriek was wafted to Sam's ears from a short distance away.

More cries followed.

"What in thunder does that mean?" the watcher asked himself.

It didn't occur to him that the jackal had tracked down the wounded native and attacked him.

As the black had nothing with which to defend himself, and was, moreover, weak, he soon fell a victim to the savage brute, and his cries ceased.

Sam replenished the dying flames several times, and finally concluded it was time for Mike to get on the job.

He aroused the Irish lad, and Mike took his place near the entrance.

"If anything comes too close, I'm to shute, I suppose?" said Mike.

"Yes, if you think it looks dangerous," replied Sam.

"Begorry, if it's a lion or an elephant, I'll blaze away at once."

Mike cocked his rifle and sat back against the wall.

Nothing happened to attract his attention for a long time, and he was beginning to think that he was having a cinch when he saw something, slender and sinuous, hanging down in front of the entrance.

"What's that?" he asked himself. "It's alive, sure, or it couldn't move."

Presently the thing presented a flat head toward him, and a pair of glittering, diamond-shaped eyes rested on his own.

"Holy mother! It's a snake. He manes to come in here, I belave, so I'll have to shute. Will yez kape yer head stidy long enough for me to take aim? Murder, he's comin' lower, and he wiggles about so I'll niver be able to hit him. Suppose I miss him; he may jump at me. Begorry, I'm in a cold sweat, so I am."

The head of the boa was now down about four feet, and he darted his neck inwards, as if searching for something that he believed to be there.

Mike, in a panic, shoved the muzzle of his rifle at the head and pulled the trigger.

A loud report followed.

More by good luck than skill the ball penetrated the

reptile's brain, and with a succession of fierce hisses his whole length of three or four yards came sliding down from the top of the mound, and falling across the fire, scattered it in every direction by its dying struggles.

Jack and Sam sprang up and wanted to know what the matter was.

"It's a snake, and big enough to make a male of the three of us," cried Mike. "Do yez hear the racket he's makin' outside? He's knocked the fire to smithereens, so he has. Look out, if yez go outside he'll ate ye up. Holy St. Patrick, but he is a monster. His head is as big around as a keg, and his body as thick as a barrel."

"Get out; what are you giving us," replied Jack.

"It's the truth I'm tellin' yez. If he comes in here we're goners."

"You shot him, didn't you?"

"I won't swear that I hit him. He wouldn't kape still long enough for me to aim straight."

They could still hear the folds of the snake's body pounding the earth outside, though the reptile was as dead as a door nail.

Jack struck a match and set fire to the last of the fuel near the entrance.

As the flames sprang up and lighted the ground in front, the boys saw the outline of the still moving snake, dragging its shattered head this way and that.

"My gracious!" exclaimed Sam. "He's a big one. You nearly blew his head to pieces, Mike."

"Begorry, is that a fact? Thin it's a fine marksman I am, after all," said Mike, feeling quite proud over his achievement.

Seeing that the reptile was done for, the boys ventured out and took a closer view of the boar.

"Was he coming in on you, Mike?" asked Jack.

"Was he? Ye can gamble on it he was. Sure the ugly look in his eyes gave me the cold shivers."

Mike proceeded to tell how he had first seen the snake coming down from the outside of the roof, and how it lengthened out by degrees and shot its head inside, when he shoved his rifle forward and fired.

"You did well, Mike. It's not an easy thing to hit a snake's head," said Jack. "If you'd hit him anywhere else, unless in the spine, a matter of luck under the circumstances, your shot would have been wasted, and he might have got you."

By this time the reptile had ceased to move, and after gathering the remains of the fire together, they returned to the cave again.

It ought to be near morning," said Jack. "I'll stand the rest of the watch if you fellows want to turn in."

"I've had all the sleep I want," said Sam.

Mike, however, concluded to take forty winks, as he called it.

Jack and Sam watched together and nothing transpired to disturb them.

The fire went out, but daybreak came on shortly, and morning broke as suddenly as night fell.

Mike was aroused, and leaving him on guard with his rifle, Jack and Sam took a bath in the stream.

When they came out Mike went in, and soon afterward they had breakfast and resumed their way through the jungle.

They traveled steadily for several hours without meeting anything but birds and troops of monkeys.

There were snakes of all sizes upon every hand, but fortunately none of the reptiles crossed their path.

After a rest they resumed their way.

They followed the stream so as to be within reach of water, and because they had no special reason for going in any other direction.

Their course through the jungle was all a matter of chance, and they were trusting to luck to come out all right.

About noon they struck another inviting clearing where they found a large supply of berries.

Here they stopped to eat and take a sleep, for they were tired and hot.

Jack thought it prudent that one of them should stand watch.

The lot fell to Mike, much to his disgust.

"Now don't fall asleep, Mike, or we might be surprised by some of those blacks we ran against yesterday. It wouldn't be cheerful to be taken prisoners, or be stabbed to death by the sharp knives those fellows carry," said Jack.

Telling Mike to awaken him when he thought an hour had elapsed, Jack, after cocking his rifle, lay down and followed Sam into the land of Nod.

"Begorry but it's hot," mused Mike. "Sure I wish I was safe out of this haythenish land, where they have monkeys as big as gints, so Jack says, and snakes as long as a ship's hawser, and as big around almost as a capstan. I wonder how big this jungle is, anyway? Here we've been travelin' through it for two whole days, and there seems to be no ind to it. Afriky is a big country on the map, so it is. I hope we're travelin' in the right direction, and that we'll come across a village soon where we'll find a missionary."

Mike held his cocked rifle across his knees ready to blaze away at the first sign of danger.

He was glad there were no monkeys around, for since his adventure of the day previous he dreaded them as much as any other species of beast or reptile they were liable to encounter.

He meant to keep awake, but little by little he grew drowsy, as he sat with his back against a tree, and finally he dropped off to sleep.

Nearly an hour passed away and nothing happened.

Then there came a rustling among the trees and several large monkeys and a number of small ones, probably their progeny, came into sight.

They spied the sleepers and set up a great chattering among themselves.

By degrees they approached nearer, and perched in the branches above, seemingly greatly interested in the humans below.

From the limb of a tree over Jack there dropped a small, green snake.

It was only two feet long, but very venomous.

Its bite was sure death unless suitable antidotes were at hand.

It lay motionless for a time, but when Jack stirred in his sleep, and threw one of his hands out toward it, it raised its head, coiled up and prepared to strike.

At that critical juncture one of the large monkeys leaped

to the ground, clutched the snake by the neck, and held it tight, despite its efforts to get free.

Thus was Jack's life saved through a strange chance.

Monkeys have a great antipathy to snakes, because they bite their young, they themselves not being free from the reptiles' attacks.

In the present instance Jocko evinced his hatred in a curious fashion.

With the fingers of his disengaged hand he gouged out the snake's eyes, slapped its head and chattered away at it as if taunting it at being unable to free itself, and finally flung it as far as he could into the shrubbery.

While this monkey was dealing with the snake, one of his companions dropped down and squatted beside Mike.

Another followed, and soon the whole lot were seated on the ground around the snoring Irish boy.

When the snake had been disposed of, the monkey who had settled its hash began fooling with Jack's rifle.

Observing which, one of the others started to finger Mike's weapon.

While these proceedings were in progress an antelope approached the clearing on its way to the stream.

It poked its head through the bushes and stood looking at the monkeys and their antics, quite unconscious that death was staring it in the face.

The rifle held by Mike with both hands across his knees was pointed straight at the antelope's forehead.

The finger of one of the big monkeys got caught in the trigger guard, and in trying to extricate it the animal pulled the trigger.

A loud report followed, and the kick of the rifle sent the monkey on his back with a shock that took his breath away.

The antelope sprang into the air and fell forward.

The three boys were awake in a moment, while the monkeys hustled up into the branches, badly frightened.

"What's up, Mike?" asked Jack. "Oh, I see, you've shot an antelope. You're all right, old chap. A good shot, too; right between the eyes. We're in luck, for we'll be able to have some roasted meat now for a change. Mike, you deserve a gold medal."

The Irish lad rubbed his eyes and gazed in great astonishment at the animal his rifle had executed.

"Upon me word, that bates the Dutch, so it does. So I shot that, did I?"

"Of course you shot it. Didn't you know what you were shooting at?" said Jack, in some surprise.

Mike looked at the antelope and then at the gun in great perplexity.

"Faith, it's bewitched it is," he said.

"Bewitched! What do you mean by that?"

"Begorry," said Mike, not wishing to admit he had been asleep, "I was wonderin' how the animal got here when I shot him about a mile off."

"Shot him a mile off, eh? That's a hot one, Mike. The truth of the matter is the poor antelope walked in here without noticing us, and you took advantage of the chance to lay him out. Isn't that the truth?"

"Have it your own way. At any rate, ye admit I shot him?"

"There's no doubt about that, is there, Sam?"

"No, for I'm willing to swear I didn't shoot him."

"Instead of proceeding on our way we'll stay here awhile longer and prepare some cooked venison for ourselves. It will be a welcome change in our bill-of-fare," said Jack.

Jack and Sam hauled the dead antelope into the center of the clearing.

They skinned one side of the animal and cut off such parts as they thought were best to eat.

While they were busy Mike started a fire, and when it was reduced to a mass of glowing embers, the antelope meat, wrapped up in large, wet leaves, was buried in them and left to bake or roast, as the case might be, until they figured it was done.

They were no great cooks, these boys, but trusted to luck in lieu of skill.

As luck was running their way, their culinary efforts turned out a success, and before sundown they made a fine meal, and then found room enough in their provision bag to stow away the rest of the cooked meat.

They then proceeded on their way.

CHAPTER IV.

OUT OF THE JUNGLE AT LAST.

They kept on after night had fallen, and in spite of the growing sounds of fierce animal life around them, until they reached another clearing.

Here they camped and built two fires, between which they took refuge.

Mike drew the short twig that made him stand the first watch.

He kept wide awake till he calculated it was time to call Jack.

"Nothing turned up, eh?" said Jack when he relieved him.

"Nothin', thank the saints, but a number of bastes came around and looked as if nothin' would have suited them better than to make a male off us."

"What kind of beasts?" asked Jack.

"Faith, it's not a naturalist I am, so I can't tell yez."

"You never saw their counterpart in a menagerie, then?"

"Niver, to me knowledge."

"All right. Turn in."

The night passed without anything unusual transpiring, and the boys resumed their journey after breakfast.

Early that afternoon they emerged from the jungle into a sparsely wooded country.

"Hiven be praised!" ejaculated Mike. "We're out of that place at last. Sure I thought there was no ind to it."

"There's an end to everything in this world, Mike," replied Jack.

"It's hopin' there won't be an ind to us before we get out of this haythen land," retorted the Irish boy.

A short distance further on they came across a plain trail.

"Begorry, this must lade somewhere. We can't do better than to folly it."

"Of course we will follow it. I dare say we shall fetch up at a village."

"But suppose the village is inhabited with thim fellers in swimmin' trunks and sharp knives, what'll we do at all thim?"

"That's a chance we'll have to take. Maybe we can make friends with them."

"How can we whin we can't spake their lingo?"

"We can make signs. That's a language, if limited, that is recognized all the world over."

"You're the leader. We'll let you make the signs."

"All right. Step out."

The sun was just setting when they came in sight of a good-sized river.

"Sure if we had a boat now it would be easier to travel. That river probably lades to the say, and I'd sooner be at say than on dry land at prisint," said Mike.

Fifteen minutes later they came suddenly upon a small hut from the roof of which smoke was issuing.

It was a welcome sight to the boys, as it seemed to solve the problem of shelter for the night.

The door stood open and they walked in.

An ancient-looking native was bending over a fire cooking something.

He looked at the boys with an expression of surprise.

Jack proceeded to make use of the sign language.

He pointed in the direction of the jungle to intimate that they had come from there, and was about to ask for the privilege of stopping at the hut when the old man interrupted him.

"You English boy?" he said.

"No, American," replied the somewhat surprised lad.

"Me talk Engleesh."

"Oh, you do? Then we'll get along better."

"Come from coast—sailor?"

Jack nodded.

"We were shipwrecked," he said.

"Sheepwreck. Where 'bout?"

Jack pointed in the direction he supposed the coast lay.

The old man shook his head.

"Coast dere," he said, pointing in a different direction.

"Is that so? We're mixed up, then. Where is there a village?"

The old man pointed, saying: "Six mile."

"There's a village six miles away?"

The native nodded.

"Where does this river run to?"

The old man said it ran to the coast.

"Can we stop here to-night?"

A nod from the old party gave them the desired permission.

"No bed," he said. "Sleep on floor."

"All right," replied Jack. "We'll sleep anywhere."

"Me 'pose you want somet'ing eat, eh?"

"We've got some grub with us."

"Berry nice delicacy dis," said their host, pointing to the pot that was simmering over the fire. "Me spare you little bit."

"What is it—soup?" asked Jack, looking into the pot and observing that it looked like dish water with a lot of black things floating in it.

The old man gave it some name that the boys did not understand.

He put in a spoon and tasted it with the air of a chef.

Apparently satisfied that it was just right to be partaken of, he got three large nut shells, and as fast as he ladled a portion out of the pot he handed one to each of the boys.

As he offered them no spoons, they were evidently expected to drink the concoction out of the shells.

"What are thim black things floatin' around?" asked Mike, regarding the objects with suspicion.

"Dem snail. Berry fine delicacy," replied the old man, proceeding to crunch one of the black things between his almost toothless gums.

"Snails, is it?" cried Mike, with a look of disgust. "Bogorry that settles it. None of that for me. I don't mind pay soup, nor oyster soup, nor what the Frinch call con-sommy, but snail soup gets me goat. Yez can have my share, Jack, with all the pleasure in the world."

"You don't know what you are missing," laughed Jack as he bit into a snail. "I've eaten roasted snails in their shells at a French restaurant, and I'm bound to say they're all right when you get used to them."

Sam drank a little of the water, but he couldn't go the snails.

"What's in the bag is good enough for me," said Mike, pulling out a chunk of the venison and a couple of crackers.

Jack wasn't stuck on a snail diet, but he stood it lest the old man should feel offended, and he declared the soup first class.

Their host presented them with some rice cakes, and they made the rest of their meal out of the contents of the bag.

By questioning the ancient native Jack found out that if they followed the river they would reach a town on the coast where there were white people.

In a direct line the coast was sixty miles away, but to reach the town in question by way of the river the distance to be traveled would be more than twice that.

The advantage gained by following the river was that they couldn't miss their way, and that was everything under the circumstances the boys were placed in.

The old man took a great fancy to Jack, and he told him a great deal about the country around about which interested the boy very much.

Among other things he told him about the country of the head hunters which was situated many miles away to the north.

He said these people were a very savage nation, and had conquered all the small surrounding tribes, who were compelled to pay a certain tribute twice a year.

They also had to furnish a number of victims for the annual sacrificial festival of the head hunters, who worshiped hideous idols, to whom they looked for protection and favors.

If the harvest was poor, or anything else they were interested in went wrong, they held a special sacrifice to propitiate their deities.

Jack was informed that the annual ceremonies and sacrifice was only a few weeks off, and as it would mark the one thousandth anniversary of the birth of their chief god, it was going to be celebrated with uncommon eclat.

An unusual number of victims were to be offered up to the gods, and predatory bands were out skirmishing for prisoners to be disposed of in various ways during the ini-

tial days of the festival, which would last a week or ten days.

Jack was advised, therefore, to keep a sharp lookout against surprise on the part of these wandering parties of head hunters, since a white man or woman was regarded as a find of special importance, and as a sacrifice would be particularly relished by the chief deity.

The old man said he had once been captured by the head hunters and had had a narrow escape.

He described the appearance of the big town, as he called it, and narrated how he had been kept a prisoner for many weeks in a room of the temple of the gods.

He made his escape by bribing one of the priests with a valuable ruby he had picked up in the woods the day before his capture.

He said the priests were great rascals, who flourished on the credulity of the people from the King down, and that they would do anything for a suitable bribe.

During the many centuries of their existence, under one name or another, the present head hunters had accumulated a great treasure of gold, jewels, ivory and other articles of value, which was stored in a cavern in the mountain range surrounding their town.

Only the priests and the King knew where this cavern was.

The old man said that a very small part of this treasure would make a foreigner rich for life, while the whole treasure would, in his opinion, buy up an empire.

When the old fellow retired, Jack rejoined his companions outside and related to them all their host had told him.

The treasure of the head hunters interested them greatly.

"Begorry, what a fine thing it would be if we could carry back to Ameriky some of that same treasure," said Mike. "It would be the makin' of us. We'd all three be big bugs, and we wouldn't nade to work any more. I'd go back to old Ireland, buy up the country I was born in, and let all me tinants live rint free. It's a great man I'd be, with a castle to live in, and the prettiest colleen for me wife. I say, Jack, ain't there some way we can get hold of a slice of that treasure? Sure it's only goin' to waste among these nagurs. It's a sin and a shame that it shouldn't be put to some good use."

"Do you want to run the risk of being served up as a sacrifice to the gods of the head hunters?" laughed Jack. "As a sacrifice, is it? And what would they do to me?"

"I suppose they'd lay you like a bound calf on a stone altar, and then one of the priests would cut your hair with a sharp knife and drop it into the chief god's mouth as a delicate morsel for him to chew on in place of plug tobacco."

"Sure I wouldn't like that at all at all. And would they dare to do that to a white man?"

"The old man told me that they preferred a white person to a native, and reserved such a rarity for the boss deity."

"Is that a fact?"

"That's what he said, and I'm willing to take his word for it rather than investigate the matter. He told me that a white prisoner is treated with the greatest considera-

tion on account of the honor his color gives him of being served up only to the head idol."

"But maybe we could find the treasure without gettin' caught by them villains. Such a lot of gold, jewels and other things is worth takin' a risk for. Yez can't get somethin' for nothin' in this world."

"That's all right, Mike; but a fellow's life is worth more than all the gold and treasure in the world."

"Bet your life it is," nodded Sam. "If Mike wants a look in at the head hunters' treasure, let him start off on his own hook."

"It's kind yez are to suggest it; but I wouldn't want to rob yez two of your share."

"Well, let's turn in, for we want to make an early start down the river. We have over a hundred-mile tramp before us, and that's no silly walk in a tropical country," said Jack.

His companions agreed to that, so they entered the hut and lay down on the hard floor, with some straw for a pillow, and ere long were sound asleep.

CHAPTER V.

CAPTURED.

When the boys awoke they found the old man up eating his breakfast.

They went to the river and had a bath the first thing, and shortly afterward partook of their own morning meal.

They then made preparations for their journey back to the coast, though the point they proposed to reach was all of fifty miles north of the place where they were wrecked.

It was a town with a strange name situated at the mouth of the river, and they would be able to find some small native craft to take them to some larger port on the African coast where they would run across European vessels.

The old man gave them two small bags for their large one, so that they could divide the weight of their food supply.

He also took a fancy to the water breaker, for which he offered three earthen bottles which they could sling around their shoulders.

Jack accepted the exchange as a great advantage to them.

He presented their host with the three sharp knives they secured from the natives who attacked them, and the old fellow was tickled to death.

He gave them nearly all the cooked rice he had on hand, and a quantity of dried fruit.

Altogether, they felt in pretty good shape to undertake the tramp before them.

"Begorry, we landed on our fate whin we struck that house," said Mike after they had started down the bank of the river.

"We did that," said Sam. "On the whole, I think we've been pretty lucky to get through that jungle without meeting with an accident. We know where we are going now, and that's something we didn't know before. If we meet with no unfriendly natives, or savage animals, we'll be all right."

As the sun got higher in the heavens the boys suffered greatly from the heat, for there was little shelter on the route they were now following.

Whenever they came across a tree they stopped for some time to rest, but there was no such thing as getting cooled off.

There was no wind that morning, and Mike declared it was hotter than blazes.

"This is a whole lot different from traveling through the jungle," remarked Sam, mopping his heated face.

"I should say so," admitted Jack. "It was hot there, but not a circumstance to what we're up against now. If there was only a breeze it would be a great relief."

The ground gradually rose as they advanced till their course was along the top of a bluff about twenty feet above the river.

Finally they spied a wood ahead, and that promised to shelter them from the sun's rays.

As soon as they reached it they threw themselves on the dry grass and panted like animals at their last gasp.

Not a word passed between them for a good fifteen minutes, then Mike sat up and took a drink from his earthen bottle.

"Begorry, it's almost hot enough to bile an egg," he said. "A lump of ice is what I nade to make it palatable."

"Ice! Don't mention it, Mike," said Sam. "I wish I were at the North Pole now."

"The North Pole, is it? Ye'd wish yourself back in about five minutes. Sure that's the other extreme. Faith I think half way between would answer better."

After a long rest Jack proposed that they start on again.

"We're not getting on very fast," he said. "I think it would be better to sleep in the daytime and travel at night. We can't miss our way as long as we keep to the river."

"Your suggestion is a good one, Jack," said Sam. "I vote we adopt it."

"Sure I couldn't slape now to save me soul," said Mike.

"We'll defer sleeping till to-morrow if you chaps can stand it," said Jack. "During the rest of the day we'll take it easy. When the sun goes down we'll push on all night. By morning we'll be sleepy enough, I dare say."

"What time is it now, do you think?" asked Sam.

"About noon in this latitude, for the sun is directly overhead. Are you hungry?"

"Not in the least; but I could get away with about a quart of ice water."

They proceeded ahead for an hour through the wood.

The trees were not close enough to give them continuous shade.

In fact, it was about even shade and sunshine, but as they took frequent rests they got on very well indeed.

At length they reached the edge of the wood, and saw a long stretch of bare ground before them which did not look inviting, so they agreed to halt there till sundown.

They ate a light lunch and then lay down to try and take a siesta or afternoon nap.

The sun was low in the heavens when Jack awoke.

Without disturbing his companions he got up and took a stroll around.

Coming out of the wood at the top of the bluff near the river, he was surprised to see a large, conical hut before him.

It was very like the huts of the Hottentots he had seen in pictures.

However, they were far north of the country of that race.

It looked to be an abandoned habitation, for there wasn't the slightest sign of life about it.

After looking at it for some time, Jack marched toward it.

Had he glanced down at the river where it kissed the foot of the bluff he would have hesitated leaving the shelter of the wood, for drawn up on the shore he would have seen two big native boats.

Although not a native was in sight, the presence of the boats indicated that a party of blacks had landed at that spot, gone off somewhere, and might reasonably be expected to return at any moment.

When Jack reached the hut he looked inside and saw that the place was deserted.

He entered and looked at a number of earthen vessels that were standing about.

They were empty.

"There's nothing here that would be of any use to us," he said. "It's rather odd that there should be only one house. Natives, as a rule, don't live off by themselves in hermit style. The old man we met last night was one of the exceptions. This would be a fine place to roost in if we were going to stay all night. If we could meet with a similar hut along towards morning I'll call it luck."

At that moment he thought he heard the tramping of feet outside.

He rushed to the door and looked out.

He was staggered to see a score or more of wild looking natives, armed with spears and sticks, approaching, and only a short distance away.

It was impossible for him to regain the wood without them seeing him, so he dodged back into the hut.

He had been seen, however, by several of the blacks, who communicated the fact to their companions, and a rush was made for the hut.

A minute later they blocked up the entrance, and spying the boy, crowded inside and surrounded him.

They wore only a breech-cloth, with an additional fold of material hanging down in front and back.

Two of them, however, sported a feathery topknot on their heads.

But what particularly struck Jack's attention was the fact that the chaps who wore the topknots had a polished human skull attached to both their hips.

For the moment these ghastly ornaments had no special significance for him, but later on he knew they were badges of authority on the persons of the dreaded head hunters, whose prisoner he now was.

A particularly ugly rascal with a topknot stepped forward and looked Jack over from head to foot.

He lost no time in exchanging words with the boy, for he seemed to understand that such a proceeding would be useless.

He believed that Jack was not alone so far from the coast in that barren district, and considered it advisable to hurry matters.

He uttered a guttural command to the rank and file—

the fellows who had no topknots—and two of them laid hold of the lad.

Another, who carried a rope around his body, unwound it, stepped forward and threw the noose end over Jack's head.

The leader seized the rope, cut off a piece from the end with the knife he carried, and ordered one of the bunch to bind the boy's hands behind his back.

Jack was not secured without a desperate struggle on his part to escape.

His efforts were of no avail against such numbers, and he was dragged outside and hurried toward a ravine leading down to the shore.

This ravine was close to the edge of the wood where Jack had left Sam and Mike sleeping.

Those lads had woke up a few minutes before, and noticing their leader's absence, had started to look for him.

They heard the hubbub of the natives in some surprise and uneasiness.

Crawling through the bushes they peered out into the open space in front of the conical hut.

To their consternation they discovered Jack a prisoner in the hands of a small crowd of savage looking natives.

"Murder and turf!" exclaimed Mike, aghast. "Thim nagurs have captured Jack. What shall we do at all at all?"

"Do," replied Sam, with compressed lips, "why rescue him, of course."

"Rescue him! From that bunch! There's tin to one ag'in us."

"That makes no difference. If you or I were in Jack's place he wouldn't desert us if there were twenty to one against him."

"Begorry, you're right. We can't die but once, and we might better do that in a good cause than live to fale that we hadn't done our juty. Faith, I'd blush to call mesilf an Irishman if I deserted a frind in distress."

Jack, bound and helpless, was pulled by the brawny native to the edge of the bluff.

Another savage menaced him with his stick. Sam and Mike rose from their place of concealment.

"Stop, ye villains!" shouted Mike, aggressively.

The bunch stopped and stared at the two plucky boys, but only for a moment, then one of the chaps with the topknot waved his stick in the air and uttered a guttural command to the others.

The whole crowd at once made a charge on Sam and Mike.

CHAPTER VI.

TO THE RESCUE.

"We're in for it, begorry," said Mike. "We must shute like blazes."

The two boys brought their rifles to their shoulders and began to blaze away.

At such close range they could hardly miss their marks, and the natives began to fall like wheat before the reaper.

In a moment the natives were thrown into great confusion, and their attack stopped.

Just before the firing commenced the two chaps with the topknots dragged Jack to the head of the ravine, and forced him down toward the shore.

The rest of the now demoralized bunch came pellmell after them, leaving their dead and wounded comrades behind.

Reloading the magazines of their rifles, Sam and Mike followed in hot pursuit.

The natives hurriedly pushed one of their boats into the water, Jack was thrown into her, and the blacks piled in after him.

Getting out their paddles they made for the opposite side of the river as fast as they could go.

The boys opened fire on them again, but had to be careful in their shooting for fear of hitting Jack.

They potted several of the blacks and then had to stop firing because the boat swung into a line so that Jack would be as likely hit as one of his captors.

"We'll have to folly thim in the other boat," said Mike, dropping his rifle and making a dash for the stranded craft.

But they found the boat too heavy to move in a hurry, and before they got it into the water the natives had reached the other shore, and disappeared up a small stream that flowed into the river.

"The villains will get away from us," cried Mike, shoving with all his might.

"Why shouldn't they when there's half a dozen of them paddling?" replied Sam. "We'll never be able to overtake them."

"Do yez mane to let thim carry Jack off without makin' another effort?" said Mike. "Begorry, it's mesilf will folly him alone thim."

"Hold on, I don't intend to desert him," said Sam; "but as this chase may be a long one, we had better get our provisions, and Jack's rifle. No use of going off half cocked. We want to be in shape to follow him as far as they intend to take him. We can't do that without provisions."

"But they'll get away with him while we're gettin' ready," said Mike.

"They'll get away anyhow. If we're goin' to chase them in a proper way we must go prepared to stay out awhile. That boat will be hard for us two alone to paddle, and we're bound to go slow, no matter how you figure it."

There was good sense to Sam's argument, and Mike yielded to his judgment.

They rushed back to the wood, passing six dead and wounded natives lying on the top of the bluff.

The wounded ones were as good as dead, for no one would come to their relief, and those that lived till morning were bound to be finished by the scorching sun.

The boys paid no attention to them, but hastened to carry their food supplies and Jack's weapon down to the shore.

Everything was packed into the boat and then they pushed off.

The river was quite rapid, and they had a lot of difficulty fetching the stream on the opposite side.

They got into it at last and found they had to make their way against the current.

"Begorry, this is no fool job," said Mike. "Thim nagurs must be a mile ahead of us by this time."

"We've got to keep on paddling or the stream will carry us back," said Sam. "When we're tired out we'll have to pull in shore and rest there."

"Sure it's not used to this kind of rowin' I am," complained Mike. "It's like diggin' a trench in the water on one side of the boat. If I only had a pair of dacint oars now I could do somethin'."

"This is the native style of propelling a boat, and they're so accustomed to it that they can make their craft spin as fast as sailors could with regular oars."

"Well, we must do the best we can, since we can't help ourselves; but sure it's worried I am about Jack. Suppose thim fellers are the head hunters, and sacrifice him to their haythenish gods before we can rescue him, what'll we do at all at all?"

"They won't kill him right away. Jack said the old man told him the festival was two or three weeks off yet. We'll have plenty of time to save him if we are able to keep track of that bunch that has him in tow."

"And suppose they catch us, what thin?"

"Then the three of us will be in the same boat."

"I'd rather the three of us were in this boat rowin' down the river for the coast."

They had gone about a mile up the branch stream when it fell dark.

Although up to that moment they were able to see some distance ahead, they saw no signs of the craft they were chasing.

They became so tired with their exertions that they were obliged to haul in to the shore, moor the boat and rest.

Half an hour later they were paddling ahead again.

The sky was bright and unclouded, and the stream so narrow that they could easily see both banks.

They kept steadily down to business until they gave out again, when they made another stop for rest.

In this way hours passed and they put a number of miles behind them.

Feeling hungry after their exertions, they made a lunch on rice cakes, some dried fruit and water.

"Now you see it was a good thing we brought our provisions along," said Sam.

"Faith it was. Atin' is one of the great drawbacks we have to contend with in this world. A feller gets hungry whether he's got the price of a male or not. Sure it's too bad in a case like ourselves that we can't carry water at least in our chists like a camel, and thin the food question wouldn't bother us so much."

"Well, let's get on again," said Sam, and they did.

The boys put in the whole night on the river, and when morning dawned they were pretty well exhausted.

"We'll have to quit and take a sleep," said Sam.

Mike felt like a wreck, and agreed that without a good rest they couldn't go on.

In their present shape it was out of the question to think of paddling under the burning rays of the sun, for they would have no shelter at all on the stream.

They hauled the boat close to the shore and tied it to a tree.

Then they partook of a light breakfast, and crawling into a thick bunch of bushes, were soon asleep.

They slept well into the afternoon.

"Thim nagurs must be miles ahead by this time," said

Mike, as the two boys tackled their provision bags. "It's afeard I am we'll niver catch up with thim."

"We'll hope for the best. We're doing all we can do to rescue Jack, and that is as much as can be expected of us," replied Sam.

"Begorry, we must be some distance from the river we left. This must be a river, too, for it sames long enough."

"Probably it is. A small tributary of the other. We may have to go clear to its source."

"It sames to me we are followin' a blind trail, for water leaves no tracks. How can we tell if thim nagurs have come as far as this?"

"We'd have seen their boat if they'd left it anywhere below."

"Thim fellows may have taken their boat out of the water and carried it off with them. They wouldn't lave it behind thim for somebody else to stale."

"That's so. I never thought of that. If they have gone ashore and carried their boat with them it will be impossible for us to trace Jack."

"Well, we mustn't give up till we go as far as we can. We must do our full juty by Jack. I couldn't rist satisfied to let thim fellers get the best of us. The only satisfaction I have at prisent is that we done up more than half of the bunch. We lift six of thim on the bluff, and we killed or wounded at least two more in the boat. If we could only get another crack at the remainder we'd finish thim in no time at all," said Mike.

"We won't give up as long as there's the faintest chance to find Jack," said Sam, resolutely. "We may lose our lives in this hunt, but that's a chance we have to take."

When they had finished eating they started on again. Night found them on the river.

They were making much better progress now, for they had got accustomed to using the paddles.

They were gradually working the soreness out of their muscles, and rested less frequently than during the preceding night.

They kept their eyes continually on both shores of the stream, but saw no signs indicating that the natives had left the water.

When morning came once more they landed and sought shelter from the heat of the sun.

"Begorry, if we stay long in Afriky we'll be as back as nagurs ourselves," said Mike, when they resumed their trip again that afternoon.

"That needn't worry us any," said Sam. "It's a healthy color."

"We must have come more than twinty miles up this strame. There seems to be no ind to it, like the jungle. Look at thim bushes yonder. There's fruit on thim or me eyes deave me. Suppose we stop awhile and gather some. They look like thim same pineapples we found in the jungle."

They landed and found that the fruit was the same variety of pineapple.

They gathered two armfuls which they dumped into the boat, and went back for more.

Suddenly Mike cried out in some excitement.

"What's the matter?" asked Sam.

"Come here, will yez. Look at thim tracks—they're fate

—naked fate, for yez can see the toes as plain as the nose on your face. Begorry, thim nagurs came ashore here.”

“Then they’ve carried their boat with them, for there’s no sign of it around,” said Sam.

“Let’s see where thim fate lade to,” said Mike, following the tracks into the thick shrubbery.

In a moment he uttered another shout.

“Now what have you discovered?” asked Sam, eagerly.

“The boat. It’s here in the bushes.”

Sam came up and saw it partly hidden in the vegetation.

“Hurroo! We’ve got on the track of thim villains at last,” said Mike. “We’ll save Jack yet.”

They saw the direction in which the tracks led, and they easily made out the marks of Jack’s shoes.

“Come, let’s get our guns and folly thim,” said Mike.

They rushed back to the boat, drew it as far up on the shore as they could, and secured it.

Then they got their rifles and provision bags.

They decided to take turns carrying Jack’s weapon.

“We’ll take a couple of these pineapples apiece, for fear we’d run short of grub,” said Sam, popping a pair into his bag.

Mike thought it a good idea, and followed suit.

Refilling their water bottles, and taking note of the landmarks in the neighborhood, they started off in the track made by the natives, not in the least deterred by thoughts of the perils that lay before them.

CHAPTER VII.

EN ROUTE.

Let us return to Jack.

When his two friends suddenly opened fire on his captors on the bluff the boy entertained a hope of rescue; but this was speedily dissipated by the swiftness with which the men with the topknots acted.

They jerked him toward the ravine, and before he could say Jack Robinson the natives had him in the boat, and were paddling across the river.

The bullets from the rifles of Sam and Mike wounded three of the blacks, but the boat kept on and entered the tributary stream.

Poor Jack believed that all was up with him now, and that he had seen the last of his two friends in this life.

The skulls at the hips of the two chaps with the topknots convinced him that he was in the hands of a scouting party of head hunters, and after what he had learned from the old man the night before, the prospect ahead was not very encouraging.

With his hands bound behind his back, and a rope noosed around his neck, he had not the faintest chance of giving his captors the slip.

If only his right hand was free he could have drawn the revolver from his hip pocket and made things hot for the fellows.

Now that he had time to think, he wondered why he had not done that in the hut before the rascals reached him.

However, there was no use crying over spilled milk.

He would doubtless get a chance yet to use his revolver, if they didn’t go through his clothes and take it from him.

They continued on up the river hour after hour, the natives showing no signs of weariness.

That Sam and Mike would follow in the other boat never occurred to Jack.

He would not have believed it possible for them to do it anyway.

He could not help wondering what they would do.

Whatever they tried to do he was satisfied would avail him nothing.

Night fell and still the boat kept on its way.

Finally one of the chaps with the topknot called a halt.

The boat was turned in on the left shore and all hands debarked.

Jack was secured to a tree and the others began preparations for a meal.

Several of them scattered into the shrubbery, and ere long returned with an abundance of wild fruit.

This, with some rice cakes they had in the boat, composed their meal.

Jack’s right hand was released, and he was given two small rice cakes to eat, and some of the fruit, one of the blacks standing close to him and handing him the articles one by one.

As he was hungry he did not refuse being fed, and then his hand was tied again.

The natives rested two hours altogether and then resumed their way.

They did not stop again till morning, though they paddled slower.

Apparently they no longer feared pursuit.

On the morning of the second day on the stream the boat landed at the spot where Sam and Mike later on found that the blacks had come ashore.

The boat was thrust into the shrubbery and, after a meal all around, the party took up its line of march toward the north.

They pushed on at a rapid pace all day through the woods that sheltered them, in a great measure, from the sun.

Long before the natives showed any fatigue Jack gave out under the forced march, and two of his captors carried him for a considerable distance.

Late in the afternoon, about the time that Sam and Mike struck the trail of the blacks, a halt was called and supper partaken of, of which Jack got his share.

For two hours the bunch rested, and then the march was resumed with the same speed as before.

The natives could certainly cover ground at a great rate, and Jack was kept on the trot, not daring to pause on account of the noose which was around his neck.

He felt for all the world like an animal that was being dragged to the slaughter-house.

When he finally pitched forward, utterly exhausted, they carried him again.

Another halt was called about midnight, and after an hour’s rest they went on again.

When morning broke the wood was thinner, and through the trees Jack caught an occasional view of a distant mountain range.

The party was all day reaching the foothills, and during

the night their way led through a wild pass in the range. As morning drew near again, Jack heard a succession of screams in the distance.

The voice did not sound like a woman's, but he could not doubt that some one was in great distress.

His captors heard it, too, but the only impression it made upon them was that of satisfaction; at least, Jack judged so from their actions and jabbering.

The shrieks continued and grew louder as they approached a turn in the mountain side.

Presently the boy was treated to a sight that chilled his blood with horror, and gave him a foretaste of the savage cruelties practiced by the head hunters.

Against a bare, upright post, fixed firmly in the ground, a naked black man was bound, and making the early morning hideous with his screeches.

Why he gave utterance to such heart-rending cries was soon made apparent, for as the little party drew near, a couple of hyenas slunk off at a run.

On reaching him Jack found that these creatures had been snapping at his legs.

Jack hoped one of his captors would drive his spear into the unfortunate man's body and put the poor wretch out of his misery.

But that was the last thing that would have suggested itself to the rascals.

They passed him by with the utmost indifference, leaving the hyenas to return and finish their work of killing him.

As Jack subsequently learned, to have put the man prematurely out of his pain would, in the eyes of the head hunters, have destroyed his value as a fetish, and have insulted the gods to whom he was offered as a living sacrifice.

So the victim of African superstition was left behind, and the party proceeded as swiftly as ever.

An hour after sunrise a halt was made in a wild fastness of the mountains, and food was produced from a hole under a rock.

After a short rest the march was resumed.

The chaps with the topknots were anxious to reach their destination.

Although the original object of their expedition was a failure, which was to round up a few victims for the preliminary sacrifices leading up to the great festal day of their chief god, they had captured a white prisoner, which was a matter of such importance that the fellows with the topknots expected to be praised and rewarded with gold ornaments and promotion.

Therefore were they in a great hurry to deliver the white boy into the hands of the chief priest, who, with his assistants, took charge of the more important prisoners intended for the crowning ceremonies of the festival.

The grandeur of the mountain scenery would have appealed to Jack under more favorable circumstances, but now its wild beauty was lost on him, for his thoughts were busy with the future, and the horrors it probably held for him.

Around noon another halt was called for dinner, and food was found, as before, in a hidden recess.

The sun was descending in the west when the pass they were now traversing ended abruptly, and a glorious valley, green as the emerald, burst upon Jack's sight.

It looked like a great shallow bowl scooped out of the range itself, for it was completely surrounded on all sides with mountain peaks that shut it in completely from the outside world.

Hundreds of yellow bamboo-walled huts, with green thatched roofs, dotted the valley without any semblance of order.

Not a tenth of them were visible to the eye from the mouth of the pass on account of the shrubbery and trees that swallowed them up, as it were.

Where only the roofs were in sight, their green color mingled with the trees and concealed their identity.

Jack saw enough huts, however, to convince him that the valley was well populated, as, indeed, it was, for the head hunters were a powerful tribe.

Close to the southern border of the valley stood a large, two-story structure, forming one side of a square, open space.

This was the idol house.

It was flanked on one side by the residence of the King and his numerous family, and on the other by the building occupied by high court officers.

The fourth, or north side, was open, and faced the valley and dwellings of the common herd.

The idol house was considered of more importance than the King's palace.

It was believed to be the roosting-place of the dread god who watched over the welfare of the tribe, as well as the lesser gods, who were supposed to dance attendance upon the big fellow.

A dozen yards in front of the main entrance was a huge solid earthen mound at least fifteen feet high.

On this stood a stone slab, raised on four boulders to a height of perhaps four feet.

A sort of gutter was cut along the four edges of the slab, and at each corner was a hole.

This piece of stone was the great altar where the chief victims were sacrificed.

No common person ever suffered death on it.

In some cases a victim was tortured there, but not often.

Death on the altar was generally swift.

As the party came down the slope from the pass they began uttering shouts and brandishing their spears.

As this was only done when a scouting party had met with uncommon success, it speedily attracted attention.

Men, women and children came running out from among the trees, and soon a considerable crowd gathered around the little band and the prisoner, and with shouts of joy accompanied the line of march toward the open end of the square.

The crowd and confusion grew as they advanced.

Gongs, horns, rattles and drums were presently added to the din.

Such barbarous music Jack had never imagined before.

He was almost stunned by the volume of sound.

At length they reached the square, and as they advanced across it they were relieved of the common populace, who knew better than to intrude beyond a certain invisible line.

They lined up all the way across that end of the square, however, forming a solid living wall of yelling and singing humanity, the color of ebony.

Half way across the square the majority of the scouting party stopped, the two chaps with the topknots alone completing the distance with the prisoner.

The head priest of the temple came out to meet them.

To him one of the fellows explained how they had captured Jack, and how they had lost nearly half their party doing it.

The priest complimented him and his companion, and said they should both be rewarded in a suitable manner.

He then struck a gong hanging from a corner of the mound.

The other priests appeared, and to them the head individual consigned Jack.

The boy was led into the temple, up a flight of steps and into a room, furnished with a couch, a bamboo chair and table to match.

The rope was removed from his neck and his hands were unbound.

The priests then retired, securing the door after them.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GIRL CAPTIVE.

Jack sank into the chair, for he was completely fagged out after the forced overland journey he had been compelled to take.

He was utterly dejected, too, for his future prospects looked very black, indeed.

Ordinarily he was not easily discouraged by adversity, but the bodily strain he had undergone had taken all the starch out of him for the time being, and he could scarcely have lifted a hand to defend himself had he been attacked at that moment.

He sat for an hour staring blankly at the floor.

His thoughts were blurred and amounted to nothing, for his brain was in a kind of torpid state.

The door opened and two priests appeared.

One, bearing a flat basket containing earthen plates of choice food, including a stone bottle filled with a species of sweet wine, came into the room while the other remained at the door.

Jack did not appear to notice their presence.

The priest spread the dishes on the table and put the bottle in their midst.

Then he retired with the basket, closing the door after him.

At length Jack pulled himself together and looked around the room.

He saw the layout on the table.

Mechanically he got up and went toward it.

Picking up the bottle, for the sense of thirst was strong upon him, he smelt of it, then tasted it, and then took a long drink.

It refreshed him somewhat, and he ate a little of two or three of the dishes without any special relish.

Taking another drink, he was about to return to the chair when his eyes rested on the couch.

It appealed to him, and he stretched himself upon it in a weary way.

Five minutes later he was sound asleep.

When he awoke hours afterward it was night and a stone lamp, filled with mustard oil, was burning in a niche in the wall.

He rose greatly refreshed with his wits about him once more.

A profound silence rested all around.

Walking to the one narrow window he looked out.

The young moon was hanging like a silver crescent in the western sky.

The arching firmament was unclouded and brilliant with stars.

Before him lay the square, silent and deserted, with the trees and houses beyond, while the mountain reared itself in the extreme perspective.

"Am I dreaming or am I really a prisoner in the hands of the head hunters, with the prospect of becoming a sacrifice to their gods?" he asked himself. "Need I ask myself that question after what I've gone through? Where are Sam and Mike, and what are they doing now? Have they given me up for lost, and are making their way toward the coast as fast as they can? If they are I can hardly blame them, for how could they save me from the fate which has overtaken me? They are but two opposed to a multitude, and their lives would surely be sacrificed. Besides, how could they trace me here? Well, these rascals shall never make a living sacrifice of me. I have my revolver still with six cartridges in it, besides a box full in my pocket. When they come to lead me forth there will be something doing, and the last shot I'll reserve for myself."

Feeling hungry, Jack went to the table and cleaned up most of the food, finishing the wine.

"That's a good lay-out for a savage bill-of-fare. I suppose these are the rations that the big bugs live on. The old man told me that they fed him well while he was a prisoner. I wonder if he was in this room? He said those who are to be sacrificed to the chief deity are always treated fine. They are allowed everything but liberty. I suppose there are two or three weeks of that sort of thing before me. Maybe I may be able to make my escape in that time, who knows?"

Then Jack got thinking about the great treasure the old man had told him about—a treasure big enough to pay a large part of the national debt of some nations in the ancient native's estimation.

"It's situated in a cavern in these mountains behind this building," thought Jack. "I never thought I'd get so close to it. But that fact won't do me any good. I'd like to see it, though, for it must be a tremendous accumulation of wealth. I wish I were free and had a chance to sample it. I could carry off enough precious stones to make me rich in America. From present indications I've seen my last of America, so what's the use of—what's that?"

Suddenly upon the still early morning air floated the sound of a girlish voice singing in a low, sweet tone a song that thrilled Jack to the core and sent the blood in excited pulsations through his veins.

It was not a native girl, nor a native song.

It was a song familiar to the boy—a song that had aroused the enthusiasm of thousands of Southern hearts during the war of Secession—"Maryland, My Maryland."

No one but an American, and a Southern girl, at that, was likely to sing it under the circumstances.

"My heavens!" breathed Jack. "There is another prisoner in this building—in the next room—an American girl. And she, like myself, is slated for the sacrifice. Great Scott! To think that a girl, and one of my own countrywomen, should be up against such a fate! I must try and communicate with her. If I needed anything to spur me into action it is this girl. To save her I will take any risk—more even than to save myself."

As the chorus of the second verse trilled softly through the wall or partition intersecting the two rooms, Jack crossed the floor.

He reached the wall as the words "Maryland, my Maryland!" ended in a choking sob.

"How shall I attract her attention?" he asked himself. "By pounding on the wall or addressing her in English? My voice may arouse the priests and bring one of them here. Perhaps if I sing they will not notice it."

Jack thought a moment, and then sang, in a clear tenor tone, a few bars of the Southern song, with words of his own:

"Who are you, lady, may I ask,
From Maryland, sweet Maryland.
To save you it shall be my task,
Maryland, my——"

A low, girlish scream interrupted him, and he heard a movement in the adjoining room.

"Who are you?" came through the partition.

"An American boy, miss. My name is Jack Jordan. Tell me who you are."

"Virginia Rainsford, an American girl. I am a prisoner in this room. I was captured by the natives two weeks ago and brought here. Can you save me?"

"I don't know, miss, for I'm a prisoner like yourself, but I intend to try hard to make my escape and take you with me."

"If you only could I should be grateful to you as long as I live."

"Well, I'll do the best I can. I was captured myself three days ago on the bank of a big river running to the sea, and I've only been in this place a few hours. Keep up your spirits and put your trust in me. If it's possible for me to rescue you I will do so even if I should lose my life in the attempt."

"How brave and good you are to say that!"

"Not at all, miss. It's my duty. You are not only a girl, but you belong to my country. Why then should I hesitate to serve you at any cost?"

"Thank you for saying so. I wish I could see you."

"Perhaps you'll have the chance in a little while. I see morning is dawning, so perhaps we had better not converse any longer for the present. Be on the watch, for I may call to you at any time."

"I will. You don't know what a comfort it is to me to know that I have a friend near at hand—one I can talk to sometimes. Your voice is the first familiar one I've heard since I was taken prisoner."

"I'm glad my presence here cheers you. Don't forget my services, and even my life, are devoted to you from this

moment. I meant to make my escape if I could, but now I shall not stir a step unless I can take you with me. Good-by for the present. I hear some one coming."

Jack left the partition and threw himself on the bed.

Footsteps sounded in the corridor outside the door, but they passed on without pausing, and again there was silence.

Morning had broken, however, and sounds came to Jack's ears from a distance.

He went to the window and looked out.

Scores of the natives were going about their daily occupations.

Nothing was doing as yet about the square.

The King and his household were not yet awake; neither were the court officers on the opposite side.

The mountain range looked cold and forbidding at that hour, like the walls and battlements of a huge fortress.

They were not as impregnable as they looked, for there were many passes and rugged ravines through which a resolute enemy could have found entrance into the valley.

The valley of the head hunters, however, had not been threatened by a foe strong enough to force a serious issue for a very long time.

They had conquered all the surrounding tribes in detail.

Had those natives combined against them the result might have been different.

Jack remained at the window till the door was opened and his morning meal was brought to him.

After eating it he went to the wall and got into communication again with the fair prisoner in the next room.

With his case knife he cut a good-sized hole in the partition, and through this each was enabled to view the other.

Jack found that Virginia Rainsford was a very pretty girl of rather small stature.

He learned from her that she had accompanied her uncle and guardian to the town of Asaba, on the Niger River, Africa, to visit another uncle who was a missionary at that place.

They had spent a pleasant month with the Rev. Mr. Rainsford, and were preparing to leave on a sailing vessel bound for Cape Town, to connect there with a steamer for New York, when an invitation arrived from a missionary about a hundred miles further in the interior for her two uncles and herself to visit him and his family.

The invitation was accepted and they went to the town in question.

One day it was arranged to visit some ancient ruins in the neighborhood.

They went, and while strolling around were suddenly attacked by a party of strange natives.

During the confusion that ensued Virginia said she became separated from her party and fell into the hands of the hostile blacks, who retreated with her in their hands.

After a long, forced march she was finally brought to the valley where she now was, and turned over to the priests of the idol house.

She had since been treated with the utmost consideration, but was not allowed to leave the room where she was confined.

She was waited on by a maid from the palace who could

speaking a little English, but the native girl could not be induced to make any disclosures regarding her ultimate fate.

The chief priest, she said, seemed to be a very intelligent native.

He was able to speak English with great fluency.

He had visited her several times, and had on his last visit the day before intimated that her fate rested wholly with him.

She said that she greatly distrusted this man on account of his sinister looks, and suspected he had some design upon her.

Jack listened to her with interest.

He did not care to tell her that she was designed, like himself, as a sacrifice to the head god at the annual festivities which were soon to take place, for such intelligence was likely to throw her into a fit of despair.

As he intended to save her and himself if he could, he wanted her to be in a condition to second his efforts.

He told her how he and his two companions had sailed from New York as part of the crew of a pleasure yacht, the owner of which expected to make an extended cruise around the world.

After stopping at the Azores, Madeira and Canary islands, they had sailed down the coast of Africa, intending to round the Cape of Good Hope and shape their course for the Indian Ocean.

"We put in at St. Louis in Senegal, and then stopped at Free Town in Sierra Leone," he went on. "Leaving there, our next stop was at Monrovia, in Liberia. Then we skirted the Ivory and Gold coasts, always keeping within sight of the African continent. Had we kept further out to sea matters would have fared better with us. The owner of the yacht, however, wanted to drop in at many of the larger native towns and villages along the entire coast. He was curious, I suppose, to observe the manners and customs of the different native tribes. As he could afford to do as he chose, why, of course, he had his way. When we reached the Bight of Biafra, north of Cape Campo, we were struck by a sudden and fierce storm from the westward. We were driven ashore on the desolate coast and the yacht wrecked. All hands, including the owner, were lost except myself and my two friends."

Jack then described their adventures from that point to the time he was captured by the scouting party of natives, and separated from his companions.

He told her of the terrible march from the river to the valley where he now was, and said he was only recovering from its effects.

He said he had a revolver and a knife on his person, and expected those weapons would be of service in helping him to escape, and again assured her that he would not desert her if he found a way to give their captors the slip.

It was mid-day by the time he finished his narration, and as he expected his dinner would soon be forthcoming, and she herself looking for the coming of the maid, they postponed further talk till later on.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TEMPLE OF THE GODS.

While waiting for his dinner Jack made a careful examination of his prison room.

It was built of the same material as the partition, namely, osier twigs and a kind of plaster made of mud mixed with some tenacious stuff.

The twigs were interlaced with upright tree limbs of various thicknesses, carefully trimmed of their branches.

These facts Jack had learned when he carved the opening with his sharp knife into the next room.

He had been careful to make the hole close to the end of the partition furthest from the window, where it was likely to attract notice.

Neither room was very deep, being wide along the front of the building, more like a spacious corridor intersected with walls.

Jack judged there were other rooms behind his.

This, however, was not a fact, as he afterward discovered.

The idol room, which rose to a height of two stories and something over, was at the rear of his room and Virginia's.

The window of Jack's room, as well as that of the adjoining apartment, was, as we have already stated, very narrow; but what it lacked in width it made up in height.

It was impossible to push one's head through it, let alone the body.

The door was made of some hard wood.

It swung on hinges made of a kind of hide that time rendered as hard as flint without destroying its elasticity.

How it was secured on the outside Jack could not guess.

He knew, from trying it, that it wouldn't budge a bit.

The ceiling itself was tall and impossible to reach without a ladder.

The result of the boy's investigations was that the weak point of the room lay in its walls.

Time and a sharp knife would reduce them to fragments.

Jack was the first prisoner who had ever entered one of those rooms with a knife in his possession, not speaking of the revolver.

Why he had not been searched and the weapons taken from him was a problem to the boy.

The under priests either overlooked the knife, the handle of which was visible in its sheath, or had not regarded it as a matter of consequence.

As the sequel will show, the knife was worth more to Jack than the shooter, though had he been compelled to choose between them he would have discarded the former.

"To-night, when all is still, I must devote my energies to cutting an opening through the wall large enough to pass through," thought Jack. "A similar opening I must make in the partition so as to get Miss Rainsford out. Then we'll make a break for freedom together."

An hour later, while Jack and Virginia were talking through the hole, a sound at each of their doors warned them to call it off.

Jack sneaked over to the window and was looking out when the two priests who had charge of him entered.

They made signs for him to follow them, and he felt compelled to obey.

One went before and the other came behind him.

Each held a short spear in his hands.

Jack was marched downstairs and led into the idol room.

Virginia was marched in from an opposite door, attended by two other priests.

Both were lined up before the monster idol in the center of the room.

The four priests retired, leaving them quite alone.

The girl was terrified by the horrible grotesque figures of the idols that filled up one side of the room, which was covered with a peaked roof made of green thatch, through which the light but dimly filtered.

The main idol, before which they stood, was an immense image, squatting tailor fashion on a pedestal, apparently of solid ebony, though that wasn't what it was really made of.

It was human in all respects, though not well proportioned—the legs being small, the trunk large and massive, the four arms long and of powerful build, while the head, but we won't describe that, since the horror was typified in the malevolent expression of its countenance, was small in comparison with the body.

The whole thing was fashioned out of dried mud and plaster, and the artist who executed it must have done so while laboring under a condition similar to the delirium tremens.

It would have looked repulsive enough in the full glare of daylight, but here, in the semi-gloom of the temple, it gave one the shivers to contemplate it.

Jack stood the ordeal well, for he was a boy of nerve, and he knew it was but a senseless, inanimate object, like the others.

Two much smaller idols flanked the big one on either side.

One with eight arms had the head of an elephant.

Another possessed the body of a lion and the head of a python, with a neck yards long.

The third had a rotund figure with a male face in its stomach, and two necks to which were attached female heads.

The fourth was the most hideous of the quartette, and had neither body, arms, nor legs, representing a central gleaming sun, with long feelers like those of the devil-fish, radiating from and swaying around in every direction.

The sun-face gleamed like molten brass, and the fleshy-looking feelers seemed to glow with a phosphorescent light, as sometimes do half putrid fish.

Around the necks of those idols that possessed them were hung necklaces of human skulls.

Pyramids of the same hideous trophies were piled at their feet.

The main idol was garnished with skulls.

Skulls festooned the walls of the room and peered out at every corner.

Altogether there were hundreds of them.

For ten minutes the prisoners stood where they had been placed.

Not a sound broke the silence.

Jack was afraid to speak lest it bring trouble on them, but seeing that his fair companion was terribly frightened, he ventured to place his arm around her, as a sign that he would protect her at all hazards.

His touch seemed to reassure her, and she smiled pitifully in his face.

To her dying day the girl never forgot the horror she faced in the idol house, and many a time afterward the scene was reproduced in her dreams.

The worst was yet to come, and the seeming naturalness of it almost staggered even Jack's nerves.

A strange, weird sound, gradually growing louder, issued from the head of the chief deity.

As it flooded the room the four minor images seem to awaken into life and motion.

The eyes of the elephant head began to roll and its trunk waved in the most natural manner in the world.

The neck of the python imitated the movements of that reptile to a nicety.

Its mouth opened, and its red forked tongue began to play in and out in a most unpleasant and suggestive way.

The female heads nodded toward the prisoners, while the central face seemed to grin horribly as it opened and shut its wide mouth.

Last of all the feelers around the sun's face squirmed and reached out like living things.

Virginia uttered a shrill scream and fainted, Jack catching her in his arms.

Instantly all sound ceased and the four small idols became notionless as at first.

"This is most extraordinary," gasped Jack. "How in thunder are these things worked? I never saw anything more natural in my life. If I had this show in New York I'd make my fortune with it, that is if the audience would stand for it."

The four priests now reappeared.

Two of them relieved Jack of his burden and carried her off, while the boy was led back to his room.

Peering through the hole as soon as he was left alone, he saw the native maid trying to bring the unconscious girl to her senses.

When she succeeded Virginia nearly relapsed into a fit.

"The scoundrels," muttered Jack, who was now greatly interested in the fair Southern girl, "to subject her to such a terrible ordeal. Why it gave me the shivers myself, and I can stand a whole lot more than she. The whole performance was nothing but a kind of hocus-pocus worked by those priests inside of the idols, but it was awfully real just the same."

When the native maid succeeded in quieting Virginia, after administering a strong stimulating wine, she retired and was immediately succeeded by the head priest, who regarded the poor girl with malicious triumph.

He was a tall, stalwart man, with a handsome face, but his natural beauty was spoiled by the evil look in his eyes, and the wicked, sensuous expression about his mouth.

He stood and looked at her with folded arms.

"Girl," he said, in excellent English, "you have been permitted to visit the temple of our gods. They have gazed upon you and declared you the fairest of the beauties that come out of the West. What think you of them?"

Virginia shuddered and hid her face in her hands.

"To-morrow you shall visit them again—but alone," he said, with an evil look.

"No, no, no!" she moaned.

"The gods have willed it, and I dare not thwart their wishes."

"Anything but that. I shall die if I am taken there again."

"Anything, say you?" and his face lighted up with an unholy smile. "Girl, do you wish to learn the fate that has

been allotted to you? You have been selected as the new bride of the great idol."

"Oh!" fluttered Virginia.

"Ten days hence, bedecked with the fairest flowers of our valley in a robe, you will be led forth to the altar outside, and in the presence of the people your spirit will separate itself from your body and become the property of your lord and master of the temple. Then your beautiful head will take its place upon the pedestal of your husband, there to remain as long as he wishes. Such, girl, is your fate, as decreed by the deity himself."

"Mercy, mercy!" cried Virginia, in a paroxysm of terror.

"Girl, there is one chance for you to escape this fate. This is the thousandth annual festival of our great deity, and in an unguarded moment, as a favor to one who has served him long and faithfully, he offered to grant any wish, without reserve, that I should ask of him. I will ask your life of him, on one condition, and that is that you become my wife with your own free will. Consent, and not only shall you escape your fate, but, loaded with part of the treasure of the mountain, we will flee to Europe, and thenceforth enjoy life in the great capitals of the world. I leave you now to consider my offer. It is the only chance you have to escape your fate on the altar. I am the only person who can save you. Think well before you refuse. Consent, and you will be the only one who has cheated the god in one thousand years of his anticipated victim."

"Have pity on me," cried the girl.

"Am I not showing you pity when I offer you a life of luxurious ease in the great world in place of a painful death on the altar? Girl, I will return this evening for your answer. To prove to you that I can do all I say, I will take you by a secret tunnel to the treasure chamber, where you can pick your choice of gems worth a king's ransom. You shall have jewels worth a million, and I will take as many more to turn into cash. The maid who attends you shall accompany us to wait on your slightest wish. In four days we shall reach Cabul, on the coast. Thence we sail for Cape Town, where we will take a steamer for the Mediterranean by way of the Red Sea. The chance I offer you is one you ought to jump at. Adieu now till this evening."

With those words the rascal retired by way of the door, and Virginia was left alone.

CHAPTER X.

A WOMAN'S PROMISE.

The departure of the high priest left Virginia almost in a state of collapse.

Jack felt dead sorry for her, but even as he sympathized with her feelings a wild scheme flashed through his brain.

It occurred to him that if the girl was willing to co-operate with him their escape might be greatly simplified and made surer.

Finally he spoke to her through the hole, but he had to call several times before she heeded his voice and came to him.

"Oh, Mr. Jordan," she said in a broken, tearful voice, "you don't know what I have——"

"Yes, I do. I know all that has just passed between you and that rascally priest. But don't call me Mr. Jordan. Call me Jack. Our situation is too desperate for us to stand on ceremony. I'll call you Virginia. If we are fortunate enough to make our escape we can be less familiar in our intercourse. Remember I am the only friend you have to call on now. I will stand by you to the last. So for the time being at least we must act like old friends," he said.

"I'll do anything you want, but you can't save me now," she said, mournfully.

"Why not now?" he asked, almost sharply.

"Because I shall be murdered unless I marry that man who was in here."

"Nonsense! You shall neither marry him nor be murdered if I can help it."

"How can you prevent it? He is coming this evening for my answer. I must say yes or——"

"The ladies don't always say yes right away to a proposal. They like to keep a man on a string, when they're sure of him. Well, you're sure of that villain, so you want to play him for all he's worth."

"How can I if he insists on an immediate answer?"

"Let him insist. Put him off, but do it in a way that will encourage him to believe that you'll yield in the end. Take it from me he's dead set on getting you, and won't let you be sacrificed to those senseless gods as long as there's a chance of bringing you to terms. He and the rest of the priestly gang are all in cahoots. They know that there isn't anything in those idols than in any other kind of inanimate object. They are fooling the people, from the King down, and are laughing in their sleeves at the easy way in which the game works."

"Oh, but those awful things move and seem to have life," said the girl, with a shudder at the recollection of what she had experienced in the idol room.

"All fake, Virginia. They are rigged up with strings and springs, or some other kind of mechanism, and the priests hide themselves inside and pull the wires that make them wiggle."

"They are horribly life-like."

"That's right, they are for fair. I'll admit that they gave me a turn, though I knew there was nothing real about them, and I don't wonder that they paralyzed you. But what's the use of talking about them? Only a waste of time, and time is precious to us just now. Do you know what I want you to do?"

"No."

"Well, listen. I think you can do more for our escape than I can."

"How?" she asked in surprise.

"By using that high priest for our benefit."

"I don't understand."

"He told you that he would take you to-night to the treasure room in the mountains in order to prove to you that he could load you with jewels. Now I want you to go with him willingly."

"Oh, Mr.—Jack."

"Don't scream out. I don't want any of the priests to hear us. I'll tell you why I want you to go. It's because

I want you to learn the secret road to the treasure cave. I'm after that treasure—the treasure of these head hunters. Now that we're on the ground we might just as well carry some of it away with us. A few handfuls of the precious stones—the rubies, diamonds and such, would make us wealthy in America. At any rate, it would make me rich, and I need the money. You may be rich yourself—that is, your people, I mean; but it's different with me. If I get half a chance I'm not going back to the coast empty handed. You accompany that rascal this evening and keep your eyes open while pretending to notice nothing. See what I'm getting at? When you reach the cave, try to find out from him if there's a way out into the mountains from the place. If he says there is, and I'll bet there is, persuade him to show you. You ought to be smart enough to fool him. You're an awfully pretty girl, and he's stuck on you. You find out the lay of the land, and then I'll get busy and we'll make use of the information you secure, and we'll fly together either to-night or to-morrow. Now will you do that?"

"Yes, Jack, I will. I will do anything you say, for I feel you are my true friend and will save me if you can."

"That's right. If you and I can slip away by the secret exit from this temple building it will help us greatly. We won't be missed till morning, and then we'll be far on our way in a direction not suspected. You must try and find out where we can get some provisions to carry us over, though we'll probably be able to pick up fruit en route; but that will depend on the route we take."

Virginia was greatly encouraged by Jack's programme, and by his bold and self-assertive manner.

Like the majority of her sex, she admired a strong, masculine will—a real man.

It is true, Jack was not a man, but he had the making of the real article, and that fact was so self-evident that Virginia yielded at once to his wishes.

Jack talked with her some time longer, explaining his idea in detail until she herself became quite enthusiastic over it.

Both forgot the peril of their situation in the excitement of their anticipated escape.

At length they broke away as the time approached when they expected their suppers to be served to them.

They cleaned up the dishes, and then Virginia awaited the appearance of the chief priest.

Jack had warned her that he had sized the chap up as a pretty slick article, and therefore hard to fool.

"But," he had added, "the sharpest man in the world can be fooled by the woman he's sweet on, so play your cards well, little girl, and you'll win out."

The high priest came at last for his answer, and was pleasantly surprised to find the girl in better spirits than he expected.

Jack, listening at the hole, heard all that passed between them.

Virginia told him that she didn't want to marry him, but would rather do it than lose her life.

The rascal grinned complacently.

Then she said that she would want him to give her some proof that he could do all he said he could before she would finally make her decision.

"I am the head man here and can do anything I want," he replied.

"Are you telling me the truth about that treasure?" she asked.

"You shall see for yourself. Come with me and I will let your eyes gaze on more wealth than most people dream of," he said.

"But can you, dare you, take any of it away?"

"Nothing will be easier. Long ago I made my plans to that effect when the right moment came."

"We would not travel without provisions," she said.

"Leave that to me. I have provisions in plenty in the treasure cave ready to take along."

"How can we carry provisions and a million or two of treasure as well?"

"Easily. I have the mostly valuable gems already picked out. They will take up but little space. One diamond alone alone is worth \$25,000. There is a ruby worth \$20,000. Those two stones alone represent a small fortune. A handful of the stones I have selected will sell for over \$250,000. Think, then, of a dozen handfuls. We can carry that much. You shall have your choice for yourself, and we will live on the rest and enjoy life. Come, let us go."

So Virginia went with him, and Jack impatiently awaited her return.

They came back in an hour.

"Now you will give me my answer," he said.

"Wait—that boy who was with me in the idol room. Is he to be sacrificed to your gods?" she asked.

"Why do you wish to know? What is he to you?" asked the priest with a frown.

"He is a countryman of mine and I would save him."

"You cannot save him. You are lucky to save yourself."

"Then I refuse your offer, and will share his fate, unless he goes with us far enough to insure his safety. What do you care? You are leaving these people for ever. Agree to help him to escape and I will accept your offer."

"Very well. He shall come if I can manage it," assented the high priest.

"You said you could do anything. Let me see you prove it."

"I'll prove it. We will start to-morrow night. Here is a ring I brought to bind our troth. It is worth \$5,000. Let me put it on your finger."

Virginia offered her hand, and he put it on the finger it fitted.

"Now you are mine," he said, triumphantly.

"Yes, if that boy escapes," she replied, quietly.

"He shall escape. Be satisfied. We are now man and wife."

"Not so," she said, drawing back. "Our union must be blessed by a minister of my own church."

"Very well," he said, reluctantly. "We'll find a missionary at Cabul. Now adieu till tomorrow night."

"Good-night. Keep your word and I'll keep mine," she said; "but if you are not good to me——"

"Have no fear. Were I not already your slave your fate would be certain, as certain as the sun will rise to-morrow."

He carried her hand to her lips and withdrew.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TREASURE OF THE HEAD HUNTERS.

In a few minutes Virginia ran to the hole in the wall.

"Jack," she said, eagerly.

"I am here," he replied.

"You heard what he said?"

"Every word."

"He will save you."

"He is very kind. I intend to do that myself if you have paved the way."

"Hadn't you better wait and take advantage of his help?"

"And give him the chance to make you keep your word, which you don't want to do? Not much. If you're so anxious to get married, I'll marry you myself."

"Oh, Jack, aren't you——"

"Oh, I'm nervy enough to do anything. I don't mind admitting I'm gone on you, too. A pretty girl like you is not to be resisted. You'd make a monkey of any fellow. I hope I haven't made you mad."

"Oh, ho, Jack; of course not. But you mustn't talk that way."

"All right. I'll cut it out; but if you liked me half as much as I've learned to like you, you wouldn't mind it."

"I do like you, Jack, very much, but——"

"Not enough to marry me yet awhile."

"We're too young to think of that."

"Not to think of it, but perhaps to carry it into effect. But there, I won't say anything more on the subject. After I've saved you, we'll part, I suppose, and then you'll forget me."

"Forget you, Jack—never," she replied, earnestly.

"Thank you for that assurance. I won't forget you at any rate. Now tell me, what have you learned?"

Everything you wanted to know."

"Good. You can lead the way to the secret passage connecting with the cave?"

"I can."

"Capital."

"It's a tunnel under the ground, and runs quite a distance."

"Direct to the cave where the treasure is, I suppose?"

"Yes. And oh, Jack, such wealth I never have conceived of. It is mostly in bars of gold and silver, and great ivory tusks—there are hundreds of them. Then the jewels! They are lovely. We couldn't carry off half of them."

"Never mind. The priest has put aside the choicest ones and you know where they are."

"Yes, in a kind of leather bag with a strap to it."

"And the provisions?"

"There are baskets of dried fruits and smoked meat, with rice cakes and bottles of wine, not to speak of other things."

"All in the treasure cave?"

"Yes, in an alcove off of it."

"And the exit from the cave—what about that?"

"I know where it is. It runs under a waterfall."

"Does it. Well, I don't mind a bath in this hot climate."

"We can get out without getting wet. The fall acts as a screen, that's all."

"So much the better. He has arranged to depart to-morrow night."

"Yes."

"We will get ahead of him and go to-night."

"But how will we get out of our rooms?"

"I have a knife. That shall carve our way. Now go and lie down and I'll get busy on this partition. No one will visit us to-night, I guess, so we need fear no interruption."

He began operations and soon found he had quite a job on his hands.

But he worked away like a Trojan, and in an hour had cut away a space large enough to permit him to squeeze through into the girl's room.

"Gee! That was hard work," he said, wiping his face as he sat down to rest beside her. "Almost worth a kiss, isn't it?" he added, daringly.

"Oh, Jack," she blushed.

"Oh, well, I won't insist, but as I may lose my life yet in your behalf, I thought—but it doesn't matter."

"You dear boy, you may kiss me if you wish to."

"May I, really?"

"Yes," and she held up her mouth.

Could he resist the temptation?

Fifteen minutes afterward, after nervily treating himself to a second kiss to encourage himself, as he artfully said, he began on the passage wall, and made quicker work with that.

"Now, Virginia, lead the way," he said, when they stood outside, the girl carrying the lamp in her hand.

She did, with due caution, and he followed with his revolver cocked in his hand, fully determined to make things hum if their escape was discovered.

Their way led through the dreaded idol room, but the girl never faltered, to a flight of stone steps that went down into the ground some little depth.

They entered at the mouth of a tunnel.

"Now we're after the head hunters' treasure," he said. "It's too bad that my friends, Sam and Mike, are not with us. We'd be able to carry more of it off."

Through the tunnel they walked, the lamp throwing weird shadows about them.

It was quite long, but seemed to be only artificial or made by the hand of man.

The greater part proved to be a subterranean water course, long since dried up.

It carried them under the mountain range to a point where they struck another flight of stone steps, cut out of solid rock.

Up these they went to a passage, along which they traveled for a hundred feet or so, when they came out into a cave.

It was not the treasure cave, but an ante-chamber to it.

A great slab of stone stood against the wall close to the entrance, resting on a wooden base, slanting across the opening.

Evidently this was intended to close the entrance up, but it would take more muscle than one strong man possessed to slide it into place.

Moving across this cave they entered the treasure cavern, and then Jack saw enough wealth to make his mouth water.

It would have filled more than one modern freight car—

the gold and silver wedges and the ivory tusks, and logs of valuable wood that were piled round about.

The most valuable part of the treasure, the precious stones, occupied a comparatively insignificant space—a small bag, which had been prepared by the high priests, and a larger one beside it.

Virginia pointed to the small bag.

Jack shoved his hand into it and pulled out a score or more of diamonds and rubies of the first water, not to mention other stones, all ready for the market.

"It will never do to take these to the United States. The duty on them would provide a surplus for another billion-dollar Congress. I shall sell them abroad, and take the money back with me. There's no duty on that, thank the stars."

With the bag over one hip, a provision bag on his back, and another in Virginia's arms, the girl led the way to the exit, before which poured down a great sheet of water with a dull roar.

Underneath this fall, along a ledge that was slippery with moisture, they threaded their way for a short distance until they came out into a wild and romantic gorge.

Whether to go up or down the gorge was the problem that presented itself.

To take the wrong way might prove fatal to their hopes, for it might lead right back to the valley.

As Jack stood debating the matter he heard a voice close at hand around an adjacent rock.

The tones were so familiar that he thought he must be dreaming.

"Begorry," said the voice, "where have we got to at all at all? Sure it's lost we are in these blessed mountains, and poor Jack a prisoner in some dungeon and falin' that we've deserted him entirely."

"This looks as if we had, doesn't it," replied Sam's voice. "We followed the tracks of those rascals till we lost them in the foothills, and it isn't our fault if we fail to save him."

"Sorra a bit, but me heart is heavy just the same. He's a good feller, Jack is, and a thousand pities it is he was kidnaped by thim nagurs, the Ould Nick shute 'em. I be-lave I could die happy if I could finish a few of thim this minute."

"That wouldn't do Jack any good," replied Sam.

"No, I suppose not, but it would make me fale better. Ah, Jack, me b'y, if I could only catch a glimpse of yez now how happy I'd be, so I would."

"Your wish is granted, Mike, for here I am," said Jack, stepping forward with Virginia.

CHAPTER XII.

PURSUED.

The sudden and unexpected appearance of Jack, with Virginia by his side, fairly paralyzed Sam and Mike.

The latter gazed at our hero with open mouth and a dazed expression of his Hibernian countenance.

"Sure, it's niver you, Jack!" he cried, in a sort of joyful bewilderment.

"Have I changed so much during the last few days that

you don't recognize me?" asked Jack with a smile, holding out his hand.

"Changed! Dickens a bit," said Mike, who was nearest, seizing his hand and shaking it violently.

"Lord, I'm glad to see you again, Jack," said Sam, stepping forward.

"And I'm mighty glad to see you chaps. Let me introduce you to Miss Virginia Rainsford, a Baltimore girl. She was a fellow prisoner, but we've managed to escape together. So you've been following me up, hoping to rescue me. I had no idea you would be able to do such a thing," said Jack.

"We couldn't go to the coast without you, as long as there was the ghost of a show to save you," said Sam.

"Sure that's right," interjected Mike.

"You lads are built of the right stuff. You are friends to be depended on, and I appreciate your endeavors in my behalf. But we mustn't stop here chinning. Since you've made your way into this range, probably you know the way out again."

"Begorry, I don't know about that. These mountains are like a mouse-trap—aisy enough to get in, but not so aisy to get out of. It's nixt dure to lost we are; and it's little to ate we have lift."

"We have a supply of provisions. You can relieve the young lady of that bag, Mike. But hold, there are more provisions close at hand which you can easily get. And you can also feast your eyes on and take a whack at the head hunters' treasure the old man told me about."

"What! Yez don't mane that!" cried Mike.

"I do. The treasure cave is close at hand—in fact, right behind that waterfall you see yonder," replied Jack.

"Behind that waterfall!" exclaimed Sam.

"Yes."

"But how can we reach it through that? Sure it's drowned we'd be," said Mike.

"Not at all. Follow me and I'll show you how to get in there."

"Did yez fetch some of the gold away with ye?"

"Not a bit; but in this bag I have a hundred or more precious stones that are worth a fortune. The gold is too heavy to carry."

"What a pity that is. And is there lots of it?"

"You shall see for yourself. Come."

Jack led the way, followed by Virginia and his two friends.

He found getting in was not as easy as getting out.

It was a difficult matter to discover the point in the waterfall at which he and the girl had made their exit.

After wasting half an hour they succeeded in getting in, and Jack led the way to the treasure cave, where the lamp had been left burning.

The boys left their rifles and bags outside in charge of Virginia.

When they reached the cave, Sam and Mike were amazed at what they saw there.

"Sure there's wealth enough here to buy old Ireland and tow it over to New York," said Mike.

"If you've seen enough, get hold of some of those provisions and we'll leave," said Jack; "but first fill your pockets with the precious stones from that bag on the shelf. You can easily carry off enough to make you wealthy for

life. But don't be too greedy. Enough is as good as a feast, and time is precious."

The boys filled their pockets with the gems, which were not near as valuable as the choice ones the high priest had picked out for himself, and which Jack now had in his possession, but none of the stones were worth less than \$50.

When Jack thought they had enough he called a halt and told them to secure a bag of provisions each.

Sam and Mike had just lifted a loaded bag each on their backs when a shadow appeared at the entrance of the cave, coming from the direction of the tunnel.

With a cry of rage the shadow sprang forward, and behind it came other shadows.

The boys turned in consternation.

Jack recognized the intruder as the high priest.

The four behind him were his assistants.

One of them had discovered the broken wall through which Jack and Virginia made their escape from their rooms, and immediately notified the chief priest.

A hurried investigation showed the rascal that the fugitives must have gone by way of the tunnel leading to the treasure cave.

Blaming the faithless girl, and swearing to have no mercy on her, he called his four people together, and armed with spears and knives, they started at once in pursuit.

"Quick! The waterfall, fellows!" cried Jack. "I'll cover your escape."

The three began their retreat.

The chief paused for a moment in surprise at seeing three boys instead of one and the girl.

He could not understand it, especially as there was no sign of the girl.

His momentary indecision gave Jack time to hurry his comrades on ahead and draw his revolver in defence.

When the head priest saw that they were making for the exit behind the waterfall, he saw they would escape unless they were stopped.

He issued a command to his assistants, and all five dashed upon Jack, who, like a young Leonidas, stood at the mouth of the exit to hold the fort.

Crack!

The revolver spoke, and the high priest clapped his hand to his breast and fell backward.

Crack: Crack!

Two other bullets hit their marks, and two of the assistants staggered around wounded.

The other brave stopped in consternation, and Jack took advantage of the chance to follow his companions.

The three were soon outside of the waterfall.

"Grab your rifles and come on," said Jack, seizing Virginia by the arm.

"Your rifle is around the rock," said Sam. "We brought it along."

"Good," said Jack, "I'll get it."

"What's the matter?" asked the girl, alarmed at their hurry and excitement.

"Our escape has been discovered, and the priests are after us," he replied.

"Oh!" screamed Virginia. "What shall we do?"

"I've shot the head chap and wounded two of the others. We're safe enough for the present. I fear, however, the

alarm will soon be given in the village, and the natives will come swarming after us. We have to hustle."

He snatched up his rifle and the bag of provisions he had brought from the cave.

"Which way did you chaps come?" Jack asked Sam.

"From that direction," replied Sam, pointing.

"We'll retreat that way, then. Come on."

The little party got a move on and made as fast progress as they could through the wild gorge.

It was rough traveling, but their lives depended on their haste.

Morning finally broke and found them several miles away from the waterfall.

They kept on until Virginia was thoroughly exhausted, and then they sought shelter in a little cave on the mountain side.

Here they rested and ate their morning meal, washing it down with pure water from a nearby torrent, for Jack had only two small jugs of wine in his bag, and he judged that it would be well to hold them in reserve.

They were thinking about resuming their flight in spite of the heat of the morning, when Jack, who was looking in the direction they had come, saw black figures hurrying forward in the distance.

He knew at once that a strong party of the head hunters were in pursuit.

"The rascals are coming," he said. "We must keep out of sight."

Virginia and his two companions looked in the direction he pointed.

The girl gave evidence of fear, but Sam and Mike never turned a hair.

They, with Jack, were game for any encounter, though they were not looking for trouble where the odds were against them.

On came the blacks, armed with spears and knives, at great speed.

They were accustomed to the mountains, and their strength and tireless energy enables them to cover the rough ground at a swift rate.

The young people had left no tracks for the rascals to follow, but the chaps knew that the fugitives had fled in that direction, and expected to come up with them at any moment.

They were led by one of the assistant priests, but he was not as spry as the others, his occupation being a sedentary one, so he would have hindered the pursuit had he not been helped along.

He had sharp eyes, however, and was the first to single out the cave, though the fugitives themselves were not visible.

He called a halt and sent the natives up to it.

"We've got to fight, fellows," said Jack. "Here they come."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BACK DOOR.

As the blacks came dashing up to the mouth of the cave with great agility, not aware as yet that they were right upon the fugitives, the boys began blazing away at them.

They fired slowly and carefully, and as a consequence every shot told.

In a brace of shakes half a dozen of the pursuing party lay dead or wounded on the rocks, and the advance was halted.

The assistant priest urged the remainder on from behind a rock where he had prudently taken shelter.

He cared nothing for the lives of the common people, but had a great respect for his own.

One of the natives, however, had been with the party which captured Jack, and the execution done by the rifles on that occasion had duly impressed him.

He called out to his friends to take refuge behind the rocks.

This they did, and presently not a black was in sight.

"They've got us caged," said Jack; "but as we have provisions, and there is plenty of water within our reach, we can stand a siege. They can't rout us out unless they boldly attack us, and I guess our guns will keep them at bay. The worst of it is that they are sure to send for reinforcements, and that means they will overpower us in the end through force of numbers."

"Then why stay here till they bring up more of their people?" said Sam.

"If we try to get away they'll bring us down with their spears," answered Jack. "Our only chance is to hold out here till night, and then try and slip away."

"Sure, can't we do somethin' to make thim nagurs show thimselves so we can shute thim?" asked Mike.

Jack said he didn't know anything they could do.

Mike stood up and looked around to see if he couldn't get a shot.

Hardly had he showed himself when a native sprang from a rock and fired his spear at him.

As it whirled through the air, barely missing the Irish boy's head, Jack raised his rifle and fired.

The native uttered a yell and fell badly wounded in full view.

A few minutes later Sam called attention to a black object creeping away from rock to rock.

"I'll bet he's going to bring the reinforcement you spoke about, Jack," he said.

"I'll keep my eye on him, and if I get a fair chance I'll bring him down," replied Jack.

When the fellow got about sixty yards away he concluded he was out of range.

He left shelter and started off on a run.

He didn't run far, however, for Jack's rifle blazed away, and, throwing up his arms with a cry, the native fell flat on his face and lay still.

"I guess I've cooked his goose," said Jack, grimly.

"Looks as if you had," said Sam. "You're a good shot."

Not another move was made by their enemies for half an hour.

Leaving Sam and Mike to watch the natives, Jack joined Virginia at the back of the cave.

While he was talking with the girl and trying to reassure her, he noticed that there appeared to be a break in the back wall.

Examining the place, he saw there was a big hole there which had been stuffed up with dried brush, which through

time had acquired the same color as the interior of the cave.

He got out his knife and cut into the filling.

It fell away in chunks.

Inside of fifteen minutes Jack had cleared the hole and found that it led out into a deep and narrow ravine out of sight of the spot where the natives were hiding.

Virginia had watched his efforts with deep interest, and she was overjoyed when he told her that they could leave the cave that way and their pursuers in the lurch.

He called Sam and Mike back and showed them the exit he had unexpectedly opened up.

"Begorry, we can stale off that way as nate as a pin," said Mike, in a tone of great satisfaction.

We must make some kind of a demonstration at the entrance to keep those rascals quiet awhile longer," said Jack.

Sam crawled forward in time to see the priest, who had grown impatient, crawling from the rock which had sheltered him to another larger one behind which two of the head hunters were concealed.

The boy took aim at his legs as they were going out of sight and fired.

The priest uttered a wild yell, which showed that he had been hit, and he continued to howl as if in great pain.

That will convince them we are not asleep, and they'll not take any more chances than they can help for awhile," said Sam, when he came back.

"Then we'll beat a retreat and leave them to watch the empty cave," said Jack.

They all passed through into the ravine, and then Sam suggested that the hole had better be stuffed up with stones and brush.

Jack thought his suggestion a good one, and it was carried out.

The party then started down into the ravine.

Reaching the bottom they found a narrow water course, which they followed.

The ravine was obstructed by rocks and brush, and their headway was slow in consequence, but they were well shaded from the sun, which did not penetrate down there.

They had no idea of the direction they were going, nor where they would fetch up at.

For all they knew they might be getting further and further into the range.

They kept on steadily, Jack helping Virginia along as best he could until they grew tired and hungry, when they stopped to rest and eat.

They spent an hour lying about after their meal, and then resumed their way.

"Faith, this is worse than the jungle," said Mike, "and that's sayin' a good deal. Begorry, it may be a wake or two before we get out of these mountains."

"Nonsense!" replied Jack. "If we don't run across any of the natives we'll get clear of these wilds in a day or two."

Jack spoke cheerfully, for his object was to keep up the spirits of his companions, but to himself he had to admit that things looked rough, and that it might be days before they made their way out of the range.

And even when they had extricated themselves from the mountains they might be no better off.

He figured that they must be at least a hundred and fifty miles from the town of Cabul in the most direct line, and that in all probability they would have to travel two hundred before they reached the town.

His chief hope was that they would reach the shallow river up which the head hunters had carried him and find the boat in which Sam and Mike had come.

Then they should easily be able to make their way down to the big river, and so on to the coast.

He calculated that they would have two or three days' travel across the country after leaving the range before they would reach the stream where the boat was moored, and then they would doubtless have a lot of trouble trying to find the boat.

The ravine wound around in a sinuous fashion, first one way and then the other, as though some gigantic snake had formed it by pushing its way through the range.

Probably it had been the bed of a narrow but rapid stream a long time since, and the water course was all that now remained of it.

When night overtook them they were still in the same ravine, and as they were too tired to go any further they camped in a little nook, ate their supper, and drew lots to see who should stand the first watch.

This duty fell to Sam, and the others went to sleep.

Nothing happened to disturb them during the night, and when morning came they had their breakfast and went on again, putting their trust in Providence, and hoping for a speedy release from their difficulties.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

During the morning the ravine widened out, a mountain stream joined the water-course and transformed it into quite a flow of water.

"I feel sure that we are on the right route to get out of the range," said Jack, "for this stream has an outlet somewhere, and I wouldn't be surprised if it ultimately connected with the stream we are looking for, or the big river on the bank of which I was captured."

"Begorry, there's sinse in what yez say," said Mike. "Sure if we had a small raft now, we could float along on this strame, which would save us the trouble of walkin', so it would."

"I suppose those blacks have discovered long ago that we've left the cave," said Sam.

"Probably they have," replied Jack.

"I hope they won't track us along this ravine."

"Sure yez ain't the only one who hopes that," interjected Mike.

The words were hardly out of his mouth before Virginia, who had turned around, uttered a suppressed scream and seized Jack by the arm.

"What's the matter?" he asked her.

"Look! Look!" she cried, pointing up the ravine.

All hands stopped and looked.

Coming down the ravine, brandishing their spears and knives, was a strong party of the enemy, lead by a chap with a topknot, and skulls at his hips.

"Let's get behind these rocks," said Sam. "They'll shelter us from their spears."

"Yes, but they'll climb all around us and outflank us," said Jack.

"It can't be helped. We'll have to make the best fight we can."

"Begorry, here's a boat in the bushes," cried Mike, with a wild shout. "Quick, pull it out and we'll give thim nagurs the slip."

"You don't mean it, Mike," cried Jack, almost incredulously.

"I do mane it. Look and say for yoursilf."

A native boat with four paddles in it was there, sure enough, and it was a god-send to them.

Providence had come to their aid in an almost miraculous manner.

They lost no time in getting the boat afloat.

Jack hustled Virginia into it.

The bags of provisions followed, and then they pushed off into the stream.

The head hunters uttered wild shouts of excitement when they saw what the fugitives were about, and pushed on faster, hoping to overtake them before they could get very far.

"Kape thim off with your gun, Jack, while we paddle away," said Mike.

Jack began to blaze away at once.

He was a first-class shot, and every bullet found a mark.

The rascals came on, nevertheless, urged by the chap in the topknot.

Spears were hurled after the fugitives, and one or two fell unpleasantly near the boat.

"I must plug their leader," thought Jack, taking aim at the man with the topknot.

His rifle cracked again, and the fellow went down in a heap.

His followers immediately stopped and gathered around him.

"Paddle like fun," cried Jack. "Now is our chance to get away."

Mike and Sam did so, and the experience they had acquired a few days before stood them in good stead now.

They never missed a stroke, and the shallow boat spun over the surface of the little stream like a streak of light.

Indeed, the natives themselves could scarcely have done better.

In a few minutes a turn in the ravine took them out of sight of their pursuers, but the boys never let up in their exertions, while Jack kept a bright lookout all around, lest other parties of the enemy should appear in a different quarter and try to head them off.

Sam was the first to begin to lag, and Jack took his place.

Mike had to slow down to accommodate his stroke to Jack's unpracticed efforts.

"Begorry, didn't I tell yez this was better than walkin'?" said Mike.

It certainly was, and Jack conceded the fact.

They kept straight on for a couple of hours, the stream growing wider as they proceeded, for mountain rivulets and falls were continually cropping up, adding their water to the general flow.

Suddenly they ran into a small lake, and cutting across

it found themselves in a river, bordered on both sides by the rising mountain side.

The sun was high about them now, and beat down upon them so strongly that they were glad to seek the shade of a bunch of overhanging tall grass, which completely hid and sheltered them.

They ate their dinner and went to sleep in reclining attitudes in the boat, Jack supporting Virginia in his arms.

They did not resume their trip until the sun had dropped behind the distant peaks, then they pushed out into the middle of the river and paddled leisurely onward, now buoyed up with the expectation of ultimate escape from the perils by which they were surrounded.

All night long they kept on their way, alternately paddling and resting.

Virginia insisted on taking a turn with Jack when Sam and Mike got tired.

About midnight the moon, in its broad quarter, came up above the peaks and shone down on them.

As morning dawned the range broke away before them and showed an open country beyond, covered with trees and vegetation.

They made a landing at the point where the range ended, and stayed there all day, resting and sleeping.

Late in the afternoon they resumed their way upon the current of the river that grew wider and deeper as they proceeded.

During the next three days they added wild pineapples and other fruit to their bill of fare, and found plenty of fresh water, for the river they were on was formed from fresh mountain streams and by-streams that had their origin many miles away.

On the afternoon of the third day Jack spied a hut in the distance that looked kind of familiar to him, as did the landscape around.

When they drew near to it, he said:

"Say, fellows, isn't that the old man's hut where we stopped over a week ago?"

"Begorry, it is," replied Mike.

Sam also said he recognized it.

"Then we'll stop and see the old chap," said Jack.

When they came opposite the hut they landed and secured their boat.

Then they visited the hut, and found the old recluse cooking his supper as before.

He certainly was astonished to see them, particularly when he observed that a female had been added to their party.

He welcomed them cordially, and offered them another dose of snail soup, which Jack alone partook of.

Jack told him the story of their strenuous experience with the head hunters, and exhibited to him the gems they had brought away with them.

Jack presented him with several of the smaller gems, which pleased the old fellow greatly, though he had no use for them.

Then they took their leave and continued on their way.

It was near morning when they reached the spot where Jack was captured, and he proposed they should land there and pass the day in the large hut.

At that moment two boats filled with head hunters, who

had been lying in wait for them, suddenly shot out from the tributary stream.

The boys were taken by surprise, for they thought they had given the enemy the slip for good.

"We must land and fight it out on shore," said Jack. "They'd have us at a great disadvantage on the river."

The natives tried to head them off but failed, losing several lives in the attempt.

The young people ran up to the top of the bluff and opened fire on the head hunters.

The rascals landed in spite of the fusilade.

Then the boys stationed themselves at the head of the ravine, resolved to fight it out there.

The head hunters made a desperate rush, but the repeating rifles mowed them down right and left, and they were unable to make any headway.

Finding themselves beaten they retreated, leaving three-quarters of their companions on the field.

They hustled across the river and disappeared up the other stream, and that was the last the young people saw of the savage natives.

In due time they reached Cabul, and got a passage to the town where Virginia's relative, the Rev. Mr. Rainsford, lived.

Her other uncle was away with a party hunting the country for her.

Of course, she received a great welcome, and so did the boys, Jack particularly.

When the other uncle returned, two weeks later, to organize a fresh expedition, he was astonished and delighted to find the girl safe, and he listened in wonder to the story she had to tell.

Shortly afterward the whole party sailed for Cape Town.

Here the diamonds, rubies and other gems were disposed of.

Jack found himself worth half a million, while Sam and Mike realized over \$50,000 apiece.

Before selling his stones, Jack presented about \$50,000 worth to Virginia, but it would be all in the family, anyway, for by this time they were so much in love with each other that they were engaged to be married.

After a month's stay in Cape Town they took a steamer for New York.

"Well, dear," said Jack to Virginia on the way home, "that gypsy who told me I would visit a foreign land and get rich there didn't miss the truth."

"She certainly did not, and she hit the mark when she told you that you were a favorite of fate."

THE END.

Read "MASTER OF THE MARKET; OR, THE BOY WHO CORNERED THE STOCK," A Story of Wall Street, which will be the next number (264) of "Fame and Fortune Weekly."

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GOOD STORIES.

Passengers on an Annapolis, Md., car the other morning were much edified to see S. E. Egerton, Jr., who has a country place on the Severn, with a market basket containing twenty little blackhead wild ducks. "I raised these myself," said Mr. Egerton, "and they are now only two days old. The eggs I secured from duck hunters on the lower Chesapeake. From twenty-one eggs I have secured these twenty ducklings." It is understood that it is a very unusual thing for wild ducks to be domesticated, yet this very feat Mr. Egerton has accomplished on previous occasions. He has raised in a tame state about 200 wild ducks, altogether from eggs secured in Canada and points not so distant, his intention being, he says, to stock his place with a variety of the fowl.

Early in April last a youngster named Eberts, living in Montana, was out in the foothills setting traps for wolves when a mountain lion suddenly came in sight, on a ledge of rock. There was a tree close to the boy and he shinned up like a squirrel and for a moment felt himself safe. The lion took a long look at the boy, made up his mind that he would be good eating without sauce, and then crouched on the ledge and sprang into the top of the tree. It was not only a small tree, but was decayed near the roots. The weight of the beast and the boy proved too much, and after a crack or two the tree crashed down. You may think it all over with the boy then, but you are mistaken. In falling, the tree carried the lion against the rocks and stove in his ribs, and when the lad hurried away and got help and returned he found the beast dead. If the lion had only waited at the foot of the tree he would have had a good dinner without price.

General Niox, the director of the Army Museum of France, has received instructions to hand over to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, for transmission to the Mexican government, the keys of Mexico, which are now preserved in the Museum of History at the Invalides. M. Sebastian Myers, the Charge d'Affaires of Mexico, in Paris, has expressed a wish that the keys should be returned in time for the forthcoming celebrations of Mexican independence. He desired that the Mexican flags captured during the fighting in 1864 by the French should be given back. But to this request an unqualified non possimus has been returned, for it is an unbroken tradition never to return trophies taken in battle. The keys, however, are only a symbol. They never opened anything, and Mexico has no gates. The keys were only the sign of submission offered by the Mexicans to General Forey.

Emmett C. Higgins and Otto Witt, game wardens, destroyed with dynamite the fish trap on the Chariton River, Mo. It had been in use for many years and was netting its owner from \$2,500 to \$3,000 a year. Ben Clark, the owner of the place, protested that he had purchased the trap along with the farm and that the fishing rights had been handed down for years to the owners of the farm. He declared that he could not be deprived of them by law. There were many farmers waiting around the trap for a supply of fish, for which they paid four cents a pound. The fish usually caught in the trap were buffalo, cat, carp and croppy, weighing from one to fifty pounds. Catfish weighing 100 pounds have frequently been caught in the old trap. The trap was a curious invention consisting of heavy timbers placed midway of the stone dam. Fish coming down stream would float into it. The catch for a day would frequently fill an ordinary farm wagon. It is said that the dam and trap were originally built by the Indians. The owners have cleared more money from the sale of fish than from the product of the farms. Frequent complaints have been made of this method of catching fish, but until to-day no action was taken.

JOKES AND JESTS.

Casual Student—I wonder why they call it leap year? Eligible Bachelor—Because it keeps a good-looking fellow on the jump.

Nell—Why, I thought she loved the ground you walked on. Will—She did—till she found it was mortgaged for more than it was worth.

Mr. Jawback—Let's celebrate our golden wedding. Mrs. Jawback—How silly! We've only been married six years. Mr. Jawback—That all? How'd I get it into my head it was fifty?

Husband—But, my dear, if Mrs. Nextdoor told you in strict confidence, you shouldn't tell me. Wife—Oh! very well; if you don't care to hear it, I can tell it to somebody else, I suppose.

Rogers—I consulted a clairvoyant before my marriage and asked her if she saw any breakers ahead. Browne—What did she say? "Said she saw twelve cooks and twenty-seven waitresses."

"Tompkins is dead stuck on his new typewriter." "That's just like him. His wife probably will find it out and then there will be trouble." "Say, is the heat affecting you? I'm talking about the machine."

"Father," said little Rollo, "what is a great man?" "A great man, my son, is one who manages to gather about him a corps of assistants who will take the blame for his mistakes while he gets the credit for any good ideas."

Wilkins—Binks says he doesn't know you at all. Bilkins—I'm not surprised, he never sees me, you know. Wilkins—But I thought you said you were members of the same church? Bilkins—Yes, but I invariably take up the collections.

"Mrs. Sandys," said the grumbling boarder, "I am going to write to the city authorities." Mrs. Sandys—Indeed, sir! What about? "About the quality of the water. It's disgraceful. Why, I detected a distinct flavor of coffee in it this morning."

DEATH IN THE ARENA

By John Sherman.

"Spanish bull fights are the most horribly brutal and at the same time the most fascinating sights that I ever witnessed," said a prominent importer of the Foreign Fruit Exchange, and whose business necessitates frequent trips to Spain. He has witnessed many bull fights and is an enthusiast on the subject. His office is hung with illustrations of many celebrated battles in the ring, and portraits of the leading matadors. His description of the popular Spanish amusement is interesting.

In all the large cities a place is specially provided for bull fighting. It is called the plaza de toros. The largest ones are those of Madrid, Valencia, Malaga and Seville. They are built of stone and brick and are indestructible by fire. In Madrid the amphitheater is oval-shaped and capable of seating 16,000 people. It is constructed on the plan of the Coliseum at Rome. The spectators occupy stone seats rising like steps from the ring outward. In front of the lower tier of seats a solid brick partition eight feet high separates the audience from the ring. A second partition or barrier, eight feet in front of the first one, leaves a narrow passageway all the way around the ring. The barrier is of wood, and is six feet high.

When closely pressed by the bull, the men escape by vaulting this barrier, and remaining in the passageway until the attention of the bull is attracted in another direction. The amphitheater is entirely open above. The seats on one side are directly in the sun, and are occupied by the middle and lower classes. There is an old saying that a Spaniard will sell his shirt or go without his dinner to see a bull fight. This is literally true. The brutal sport was introduced into Spain by the Moors, and has been kept up in much the same manner that the Roman games were. The populace demand something to amuse and distract them, and the instability of the Spanish monarchy has made it good policy to please the people. The bull fights take place every Sunday. This is the feast day, and the only day that all classes can be in attendance. The public go en masse—men, women and children. They crowd the vast place full. The heat is something intolerable. The seats are slabs of stone, yet for over four hours the crowd will sit there and yell with delight when any unusually bloody spectacle occurs.

On the shady side of the arena the elite of the city are gathered. The royal box is usually occupied by some members of the reigning family; other private boxes are filled with the rank and fashion of the town. Belles and their attendant cavaliers are numerous. The prices of admission are two pesetas, equal to forty cents, for the sun seats, and twenty pesetas, or four dollars, for the box seats.

The bulls that are used are bred expressly for the purpose. They come from stock of a warlike tendency, and every effort is made to increase their fighting ability. They are large, weighing from 2,000 to 2,200 pounds, and of great strength. Their horns are long and branching and sharp at the points. While still young the training of the bulls is begun. Red cloths are flaunted before them, and their temper is tried by pricking them with pointed sticks. They soon learn to regard anything red as an antagonist, and when they enter the ring they are as ferocious as lions.

A governor of the fight is chosen to see that the rules of the ring are observed. These rules are as explicit as those of a base-ball game. The right of the bull to be killed, according to the customs that have prevailed from the earliest times,

is rigidly observed. Although he enters the ring never to depart, he is given fair play to the very last. The incidental slaughter of half a dozen horses, and the maiming, or even the killing, of a man or two does not interfere with the rights of toro, the bull.

The fight begins at 3 p. m. A bugle note sounds the warning, and the gates are thrown open to lively music by the band. Two mounted princes enter first. They are dressed in gorgeous costumes of velvet, embroidered with beads and tinsel. Silken hosiery and lace at sleeves and neck are worn. The horses are gayly caparisoned. Following them are the matadors, who are the most skillful performers in the ring. They are likewise dressed with great magnificence. Mazzantini, one of the most celebrated matadors, wears a costume costing \$700 and diamonds that are worth many thousands. Three picadors, half a dozen torreadors and a number of assistants bring up the rear of the procession. The picadors are mounted, and carry long spears, with heavy, round-pointed heads. The part which they play is the most dangerous of any. They are prepared for it, by a heavy steel armor from their hips to their feet. The torreadors wear red mantles, with which they tantalize the bull, and distract him when he has any of the other performers at a disadvantage.

The procession marches around the ring and pauses in front of the governor, whom they salute. He throws the keys of the pen, which have been in his possession to insure the safety of the bulls, to the princes. They take them, with much ceremony, to the custodian of the bulls and immediately get out of the ring.

The bugle sounds, the gates of the pen are swung back, and the bull enters. As he does so, the keeper throws a sharp-pointed, barbed hook, with a percussion cap at one end and a tuft of gay ribbons at the other. As the barb enters the flesh, the cap explodes. This infuriates the bull, so that he is ready for the fray. He makes a dash for the nearest matador, who jumps over the barrier, and the crowd cheers the bull. The red mantles madden him, and he dashes at the wearer until he has cleared the ring. Frequently he gains so much momentum in his wild rushes that he brings up with terrible force against the wooden partition, just as his tormentor escapes. Sometimes a matador is caught, so that he runs across the ring, with the bull in hot pursuit. This race for life or death elicits howls of delight from the excited crowd. If a man does not vault the barrier in time, the bull tosses him over, or perhaps catches a leg or a foot between his horns and the woodwork.

When the animal has made it too hot for his tormentors in the ring, he marches to the center of the space, and pawing the ground, snorting and bellowing he awaits attack. Several torreadors now enter and commence their tactics of exhausting the bull. One attracts him with a scarf; a blanket thrown in front of his eyes by another allows the first one to escape. When he begins to tire, a mounted picador rides into the ring. At sight of him the crowd applauds, for now the bloody work is to begin. If the bull hesitates to attack the rider he is goaded, and barbs are thrown into his sides until he rushes in mad fury at the picador. This individual sits firmly in his seat with a spear at rest and receives the charge straight from the front. The horse does not stir for the simple reason that the poor beast is blindfolded. As the bull charges the spear enters his neck, breaking part of the shock, but not all. The horns pierce the breast of the horse and sink out of sight in his body. Sometimes they wedge themselves firmly between his bones, so that the bull is not able to extricate them and renew the charge, in which case the enormous strength of the bull is such that he lifts horse and rider into the air and shakes them. This generally liberates the horns and results in a further goring of the horse.

The picador is often thrown with the horse on top of him, and even when clear of the horse, the weight of his armor is so great that he has to be assisted to escape to the barrier. If no vital part of the horse is pierced on the first onslaught, he rises from the ground only to be thrown again by the maddened bull. When finally the bull's vengeance is exhausted, the horse rises, and, with entrails protruding, rushes in blind agony about the ring. He frequently dashes against the barrier with such force as to throw himself to the ground, and if unable to rise, one of the assistants ends his suffering by piercing his brain with a dagger.

The position of the picadors during the charges of the bull are most precarious. They have many narrow escapes, and are sometimes lifted in the air and alight upon the back of the bull. One close call occurred recently. A picador was thrown to the ground, but escaped by lying perfectly still and feigning death, while the bull sniffed over him and finally walked away.

After the death of the first horse the governor calls in a second picador, who receives the charge of the bull. Sometimes a single bull kills a dozen horses before he tires. Occasionally he retires from the attack with the long spear stuck deep in his neck and waving in the air as he walks.

Two of the most expert of the torreadors now take barb-shaped arrows, to which long ribbons are attached. Standing in the center of the ring one of the men attracts the bull, who charges on him. As the animal lowers its head to toss him, he reaches over the horns, and with lightning agility he pushes the barbs into the flesh, one on each side of the neck, jumps to one side and runs for the barrier with the bull in full pursuit. This feat sometimes results in the man being gored to death, but if successful he is loudly applauded. After the strength of the bull is still more exhausted by the harassing of the torreadors the final act of the tragedy begins.

Mazzantini, the pride of the ladies, appears. Salvoes of applause to welcome him. He is second only to the king in the estimation of Spaniards, and of the two he doubtless receives the greater homage. He is the pet of the populace. To obtain a smile from him is an honor. With a proud and lofty mien he steps upon the scene. Bowing condescendingly to all he prepares for his bloody work. Draping his mantle over his sword, he advances and flaunts it in the face of the bull. The laws of the bull ring require him to stand facing the bull when he makes the final stroke, and the stroke must be delivered in a certain spot. The bull's head must be lowered as in a charge. When in this position there is an opening about the size of a silver dollar between the first bone of the spinal column and the base of the skull. This spot is about six inches down in the thick flesh and muscles of the bull's neck, and the blow must be delivered with unerring precision to penetrate this orifice.

The bull makes several charges at Mazzantini, who dexterously jumps aside, but when he gets the brute in the right position, his sword flashes out of the mantle and sinks to the hilt in the neck of the bull. The animal drops to his knees, trembles an instant, and then falls prone to the ground; the spinal column is severed and the rush of blood from the mouth shows that the jugular vein is also reached. Mazzantini stands bowing to the bull, kissing his hand to him and bidding him a last farewell. The excited audience yell themselves hoarse. Flowers, cigars and presents of all kinds are thrown to the successful matador. In their wild enthusiasm the audience throw silk hats, coats and even shoes to their idol.

A failure to kill the bull according to the code is received with great disapprobation. Hissing, howling, cat-calls and even throwing of oranges is indulged in. This latter act is as insulting to a Spaniard as over-ripe eggs are to an Ameri-

can actor. The rabble are only kept from violence by the presence of soldiery.

The performance lasts from three o'clock until seven. About six bulls are killed during the interval, and the number of horses and men sacrificed depends on their luck and agility. The three great bull-fighters of Spain are Mazzantini, Frascuelo and Lagurtigo. Mazzantini was paid \$30,000 to go to Mexico last summer and appear at thirty performances.

WATCH SCREWS AND JEWELS

Probably the smallest screws are those turned out in a watch factory. They are cut from steel wire by a machine, but, as the chips fall from the knife, one is tempted to observe that the operator is amusing himself, inasmuch as no screws can be seen. Yet, at every third operation of the machine a screw is duly completed.

The fourth jewel-wheel screw is next to invisible, and to the naked eye it resembles a speck of dust. With a glass, it may be seen to be a small screw, and some calculation reveals the fact that it has two hundred and sixty threads to the inch. It takes a very powerful glass to observe these threads.

These screws are said to be but four one-thousandths of an inch in diameter, and the heads are double in size. It has been estimated that an ordinary thimble could contain one hundred thousand of them.

Quite a number of new jewel settings have been added to the movements of first-class watches during the last ten years. These new jewels have created an added demand for expert jewel-setters.

The term "jewel" in a watch movement is to be taken literally. The small precious stones are drilled to receive the pinions or axles of the wheels, the object being to provide a bearing that will not corrode and will not wear away easily.

The garnet is the least valuable of these jewel settings, but some of the minute sapphires and rubies employed in the bearings of a watch are quite good enough for the setting of a ring.

For the most part, however, these fragments of precious stones are off color, the sapphire especially pale to insignificance, but at the same time harder and better for watch-jewels because of this light color. Occasionally a ruby jewel burns red in one of the neat little envelopes in which they come from Switzerland, five hundred or one thousand in a lot.

Each stone is shaped to a circle and bored through the center, each boring being just a little less than the diameter of the pinion used in the factory where it is finally to be placed in the upper or the lower plate of a watch.

The immediate setting for the watch-jewel is a minute cylinder, brassy in appearance, but really of soft gold composition. Before the jewel gets to the setter it has been put into a lathe, and by means of a minute steel point covered with diamond dust and oil the center has been enlarged to fit the steel pinion which shall be housed in it. In the hands of the setter the cylinder is put into a lathe. With a moistened finger the jewel is picked up and placed inside the cylinder as it rests on the tip of the revolving lathe shaft. With a pointed tool the setter presses against the revolving cylinder edge, forcing the soft metal to overlap and close upon the sapphire or ruby till it is embedded firmly in the metal cushion; then a pressure upon a follower at the other end of the lathe brings a cutter to bear upon the metal circumference, turning it to the exact size of the jewel-hole in the plate of the watch, with the hole in the center of the jewel exactly in the center of the metal setting.

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